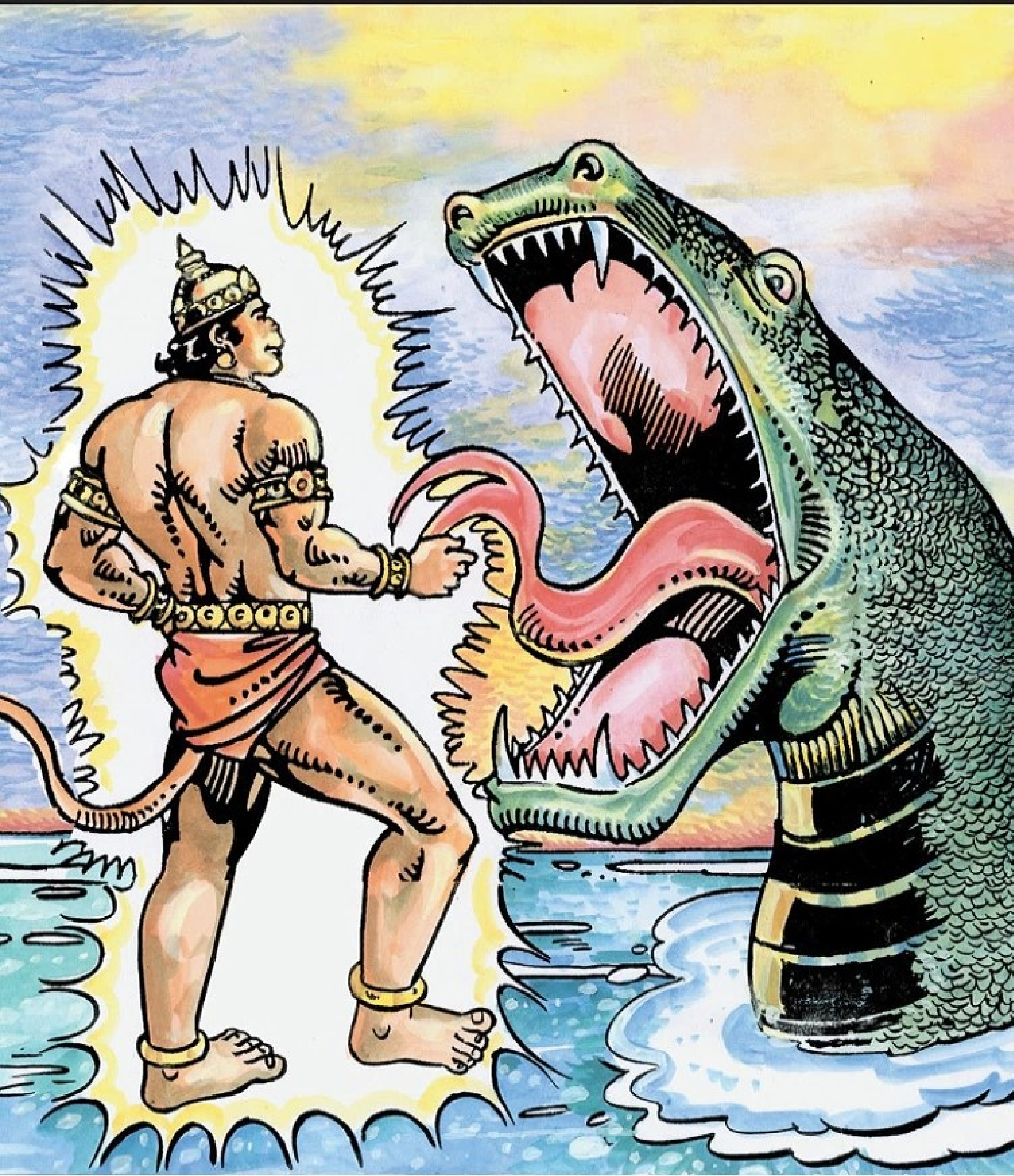
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

IN SEARCH OF SITA

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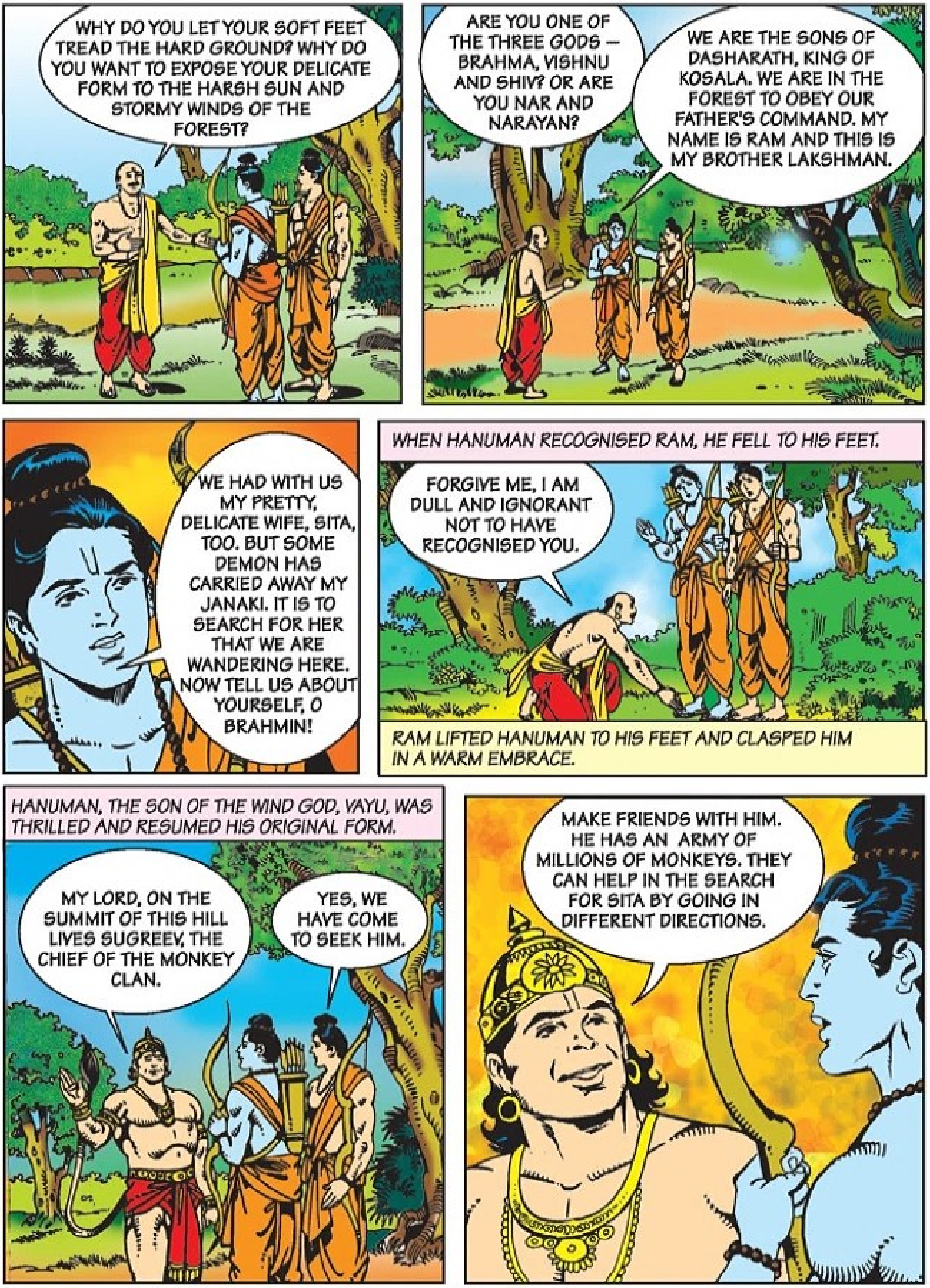


राम ब्रह्म व्यापक जगजाना।
परमानंद परेस पुराना

Ram is the all- pervading Brahman. He is the Supreme Bliss, the highest Lord and the most ancient being, as is known to the whole world.

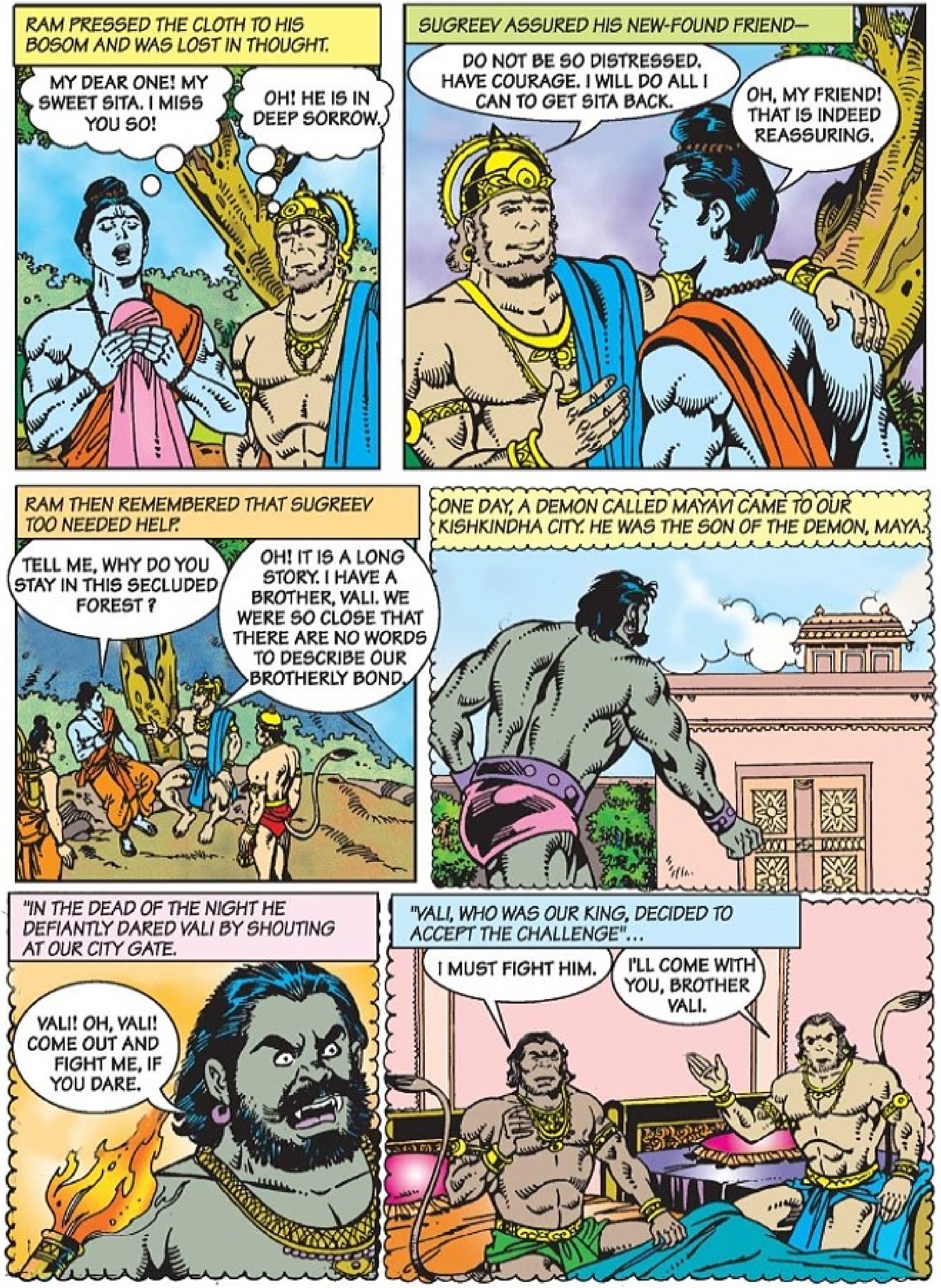



IN SEARCH OF SITA
IN THEIR SEARCH OF SITA, RAM AND LAKSHMAN REACHED THE SHORES OF LAKE PAMPA.
LOOK, LAKSHMAN! THAT MUST BE THE RISHYAMUK MOUNTAIN.
YES! WE WILL FIND SUGREEV, THE MONKEY CHIEF, THERE.
FROM HIS HIDDEN ABODE UPON THE HILL, SUGREEV SAW THE TWO BROTHERS APPROACHING.
LOOK AT THOSE TWO MEN COMING IN THIS DIRECTION.
IT WAS NOT OFTEN THAT STRANGERS WANDERED INTO THE MONKEY KINGDOM.
SUGREEV SUMMONED HIS MINISTER, HANUMAN.
THEY LOOK VERY PURPOSEFUL AND STRONG. I'LL FIND OUT WHO THEY ARE!
BUT TAKE CARE! GO DISGUISED AS A BRAHMIN STUDENT AND MAKE DISCREET ENQUIRY.
HANUMAN AT ONCE DISGUISED HIMSELF.
LISTEN CAREFULLY! YOU MUST CHECK OUT THEIR INTENTIONS AND INFORM ME BY A SIGN. FOR IF THEY HAVE BEEN SENT BY THAT VILE VALI, I MUST LEAVE THIS HILL AND FLEE AT ONCE!
HANUMAN RAN DOWNHILL AND BOWED RESPECTFULLY TO THE VISITORS.
WHO ARE YOU TWO HEROES, ONE DARK AND THE OTHER FAIR? WHY ARE YOU ROAMING IN THE FOREST IN THE GUISE OF KSHATRIYS?

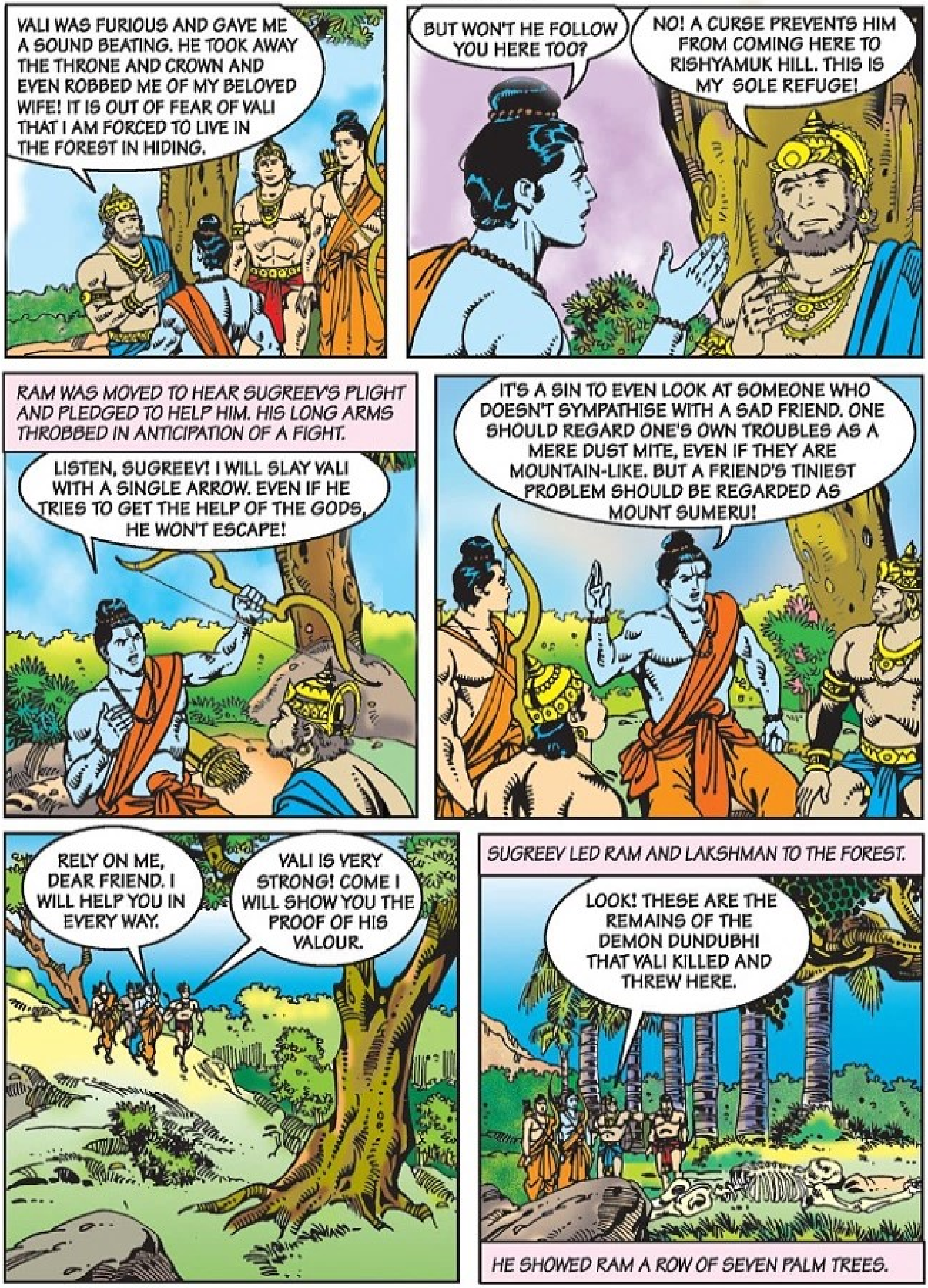

WHY DO YOU LET YOUR SOFT FEET TREAD THE HARD GROUND? WHY DO YOU WANT TO EXPOSE YOUR DELICATE FORM TO THE HARSH SUN AND STORMY WINDS OF THE FOREST?
ARE YOU ONE OF THE THREE GODS – BRAHMA, VISHNU AND SHIV? OR ARE YOU NAR AND NARAYAN?
WE ARE THE SONS OF DASHARATH, KING OF KOSALA. WE ARE IN THE FOREST TO OBEY OUR FATHER'S COMMAND. MY NAME IS RAM AND THIS IS MY BROTHER LAKSHMAN.
WE HAD WITH US MY PRETTY, DELICATE WIFE, SITA, TOO. BUT SOME DEMON HAS CARRIED AWAY MY JANAKI. IT IS TO SEARCH FOR HER THAT WE ARE WANDERING HERE. NOW TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF, O BRAHMIN!
WHEN HANUMAN RECOGNISED RAM, HE FELL TO HIS FEET.
FORGIVE ME, I AM DULL AND IGNORANT NOT TO HAVE RECOGNISED YOU.
RAM LIFTED HANUMAN TO HIS FEET AND CLASPED HIM IN A WARM EMBRACE.
HANUMAN, THE SON OF THE WIND GOD, VAYU, WAS THRILLED AND RESUMED HIS ORIGINAL FORM.
MY LORD, ON THE SUMMIT OF THIS HILL LIVES SUGREEV, THE CHIEF OF THE MONKEY CLAN.
YES, WE HAVE COME TO SEEK HIM.
MAKE FRIENDS WITH HIM. HE HAS AN ARMY OF MILLIONS OF MONKEYS. THEY CAN HELP IN THE SEARCH FOR SITA BY GOING IN DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS.


COME, LET'S GO AND MEET SUGREEV.
SHOW US THE WAY, HANUMAN!
HANUMAN, WITH HIS STRONG, GIGANTIC FORM, HAD A BETTER IDEA.
WHY SHOULD YOU TRUDGE UPHILL? COME, LET ME GIVE YOU A RIDE!
HANUMAN BENT DOWN...
...AND SEATED THE TWO BROTHERS ON HIS MASSIVE BACK.
IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE, THEY REACHED SUGREEV'S ABODE.
SUGREEV RECEIVED THEM WITH REVERENCE.
I AM HIGHLY BLESSED BY YOUR PRESENCE.
WE ARE GLAD TO MEET YOU.
RAM AND LAKSHMAN EMBRACED SUGREEV WARMLY.
CAN WE REALLY BE FRIENDS? I WONDER!
WILL HE HELP ME, I WONDER.
IT WAS THEN THAT HANUMAN STEPPED IN AND EXPLAINED THE CIRCUMSTANCES ON BOTH SIDES.
RAM AND LAKSHMAN ARE SEARCHING FOR SITA, WHO HAS BEEN TAKEN AWAY.
OUR KING, SUGREEV, NEEDS AN ALLY TO FIGHT AGAINST HIS FOE, VALI.


ON HANUMAN'S SUGGESTION, SUGREEV AND RAM MADE A FIRM ALLIANCE OF FRIENDSHIP.
WITH THE HOLY FIRE AS WITNESS, I DECLARE THAT YOU TWO ARE NOW BOUND BY FRIENDSHIP AND WILL HELP EACH OTHER IN EVERY WAY.
I AGREE.
RAM AND SUGREEV EMBRACED EACH OTHER WARMLY. LAKSHMAN THEN NARRATED ALL THE INCIDENTS THAT HAD BROUGHT THEM TO KISHKINDHA.
... SO WE WERE GUIDED BY SHABARI TO SEEK YOUR HELP IN LOCATING SITA.
SITA WILL BE FOUND, THAT I FIRMLY DECLARE.
SUGREEV'S EYES FILLED WITH TEARS.
SUGREEV THEN RECALLED THE SIGHT HE HAD WITNESSED SOME TIME AGO.
I WAS SITTING HERE ON THE HILL WITH MY MINISTERS...
..."I SAW SITA BEING CARRIED AWAY, WEEPING COPIOUSLY"...
HELP! HELP!
..."SHE CRIED OUT FOR YOU AND THEN WHEN SHE SAW US, THREW A GARMENT DOWN"...
RAM! O, RAM!
RAM WAS THRILLED TO HEAR SOME NEWS OF SITA.
OH! DO YOU HAVE HER GARMENT? MAY I SEE IT?
YES, OF COURSE! HERE YOU ARE!

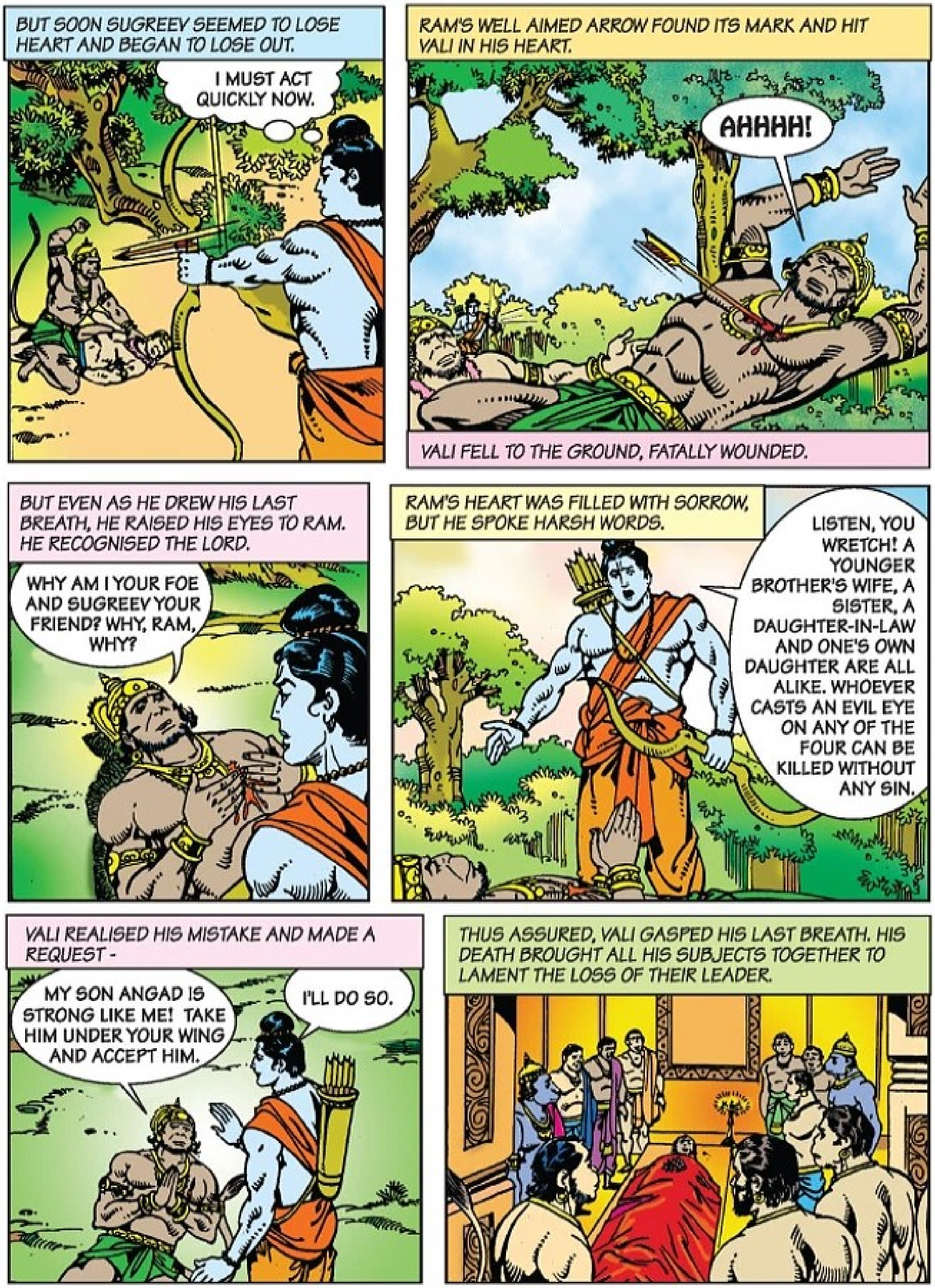

RAM PRESSED THE CLOTH TO HIS BOSOM AND WAS LOST IN THOUGHT.
MY DEAR ONE! MY SWEET SITA. I MISS YOU SO!
OH! HE IS IN DEEP SORROW.
SUGREEV ASSURED HIS NEW-FOUND FRIEND—
DO NOT BE SO DISTRESSED. HAVE COURAGE. I WILL DO ALL I CAN TO GET SITA BACK.
OH, MY FRIEND! THAT IS INDEED REASSURING.
RAM THEN REMEMBERED THAT SUGREEV TOO NEEDED HELP.
TELL ME, WHY DO YOU STAY IN THIS SECLUDED FOREST ?
OH! IT IS A LONG STORY. I HAVE A BROTHER, VALI. WE WERE SO CLOSE THAT THERE ARE NO WORDS TO DESCRIBE OUR BROTHERLY BOND.
ONE DAY, A DEMON CALLED MAYAVI CAME TO OUR KISHKINDHA CITY. HE WAS THE SON OF THE DEMON, MAYA.
"IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT HE DEFIANTLY DARED VALI BY SHOUTING AT OUR CITY GATE.
VALI! OH, VALI! COME OUT AND FIGHT ME, IF YOU DARE.
"VALI, WHO WAS OUR KING, DECIDED TO ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE"...
I MUST FIGHT HIM.
I'LL COME WITH YOU, BROTHER VALI.


AS SOON AS HE SAW VALI, MAYAVI TOOK TO HIS HEELS. WE FOLLOWED HIM AS HE RAN OUT OF TOWN.
THEN WHAT HAPPENED?
THE DEMON MAYAVI RAN INTO A DEEP CAVE IN THE MOUNTAINS. MY BROTHER VALI CHASED HIM.
I'M GOING INTO THE CAVE AFTER HIM. YOU WAIT HERE FOR A FORTNIGHT. IF I DON'T RETURN BY THEN YOU MUST ACCEPT THAT I HAVE BEEN SLAIN.
I'LL CAMP RIGHT HERE AND WAIT.
"I WAITED FOR A MONTH AT THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE. THEN ONE DAY I SAW A HUGE STREAM OF BLOOD COMING OUT FROM IT"...
OHH! MY POOR BROTHER VALI HAS BEEN KILLED. NOW THE DEMON MAY COME AFTER ME. I'LL BLOCK THE CAVE WITH A ROCK AND RUN OFF.
WHEN I RETURNED TO THE CITY WITHOUT VALI, THE MINISTERS INSISTED ON CROWNING ME THE KING OF KISHKINDHA.
OHH!
BUT VALI WAS NOT DEAD. HE HAD KILLED THE DEMON AND RETURNED TO THE PALACE.
YOU! YOU TRAITOR! HOW DARE YOU USURP MY THRONE!
BUT...BUT...I THOUGHT...
SHUT UP! DON'T MAKE ANY EXCUSES NOW! I KNOW YOU CLOSED THE CAVE TO GET RID OF ME SO THAT YOU COULD RULE KISHKINDHA.
N-NO! NOT AT ALL.


VALI WAS FURIOUS AND GAVE ME A SOUND BEATING. HE TOOK AWAY THE THRONE AND CROWN AND EVEN ROBBED ME OF MY BELOVED WIFE! IT IS OUT OF FEAR OF VALI THAT I AM FORCED TO LIVE IN THE FOREST IN HIDING.
BUT WON'T HE FOLLOW YOU HERE TOO?
NO! A CURSE PREVENTS HIM FROM COMING HERE TO RISHYAMUK HILL. THIS IS MY SOLE REFUGE!
RAM WAS MOVED TO HEAR SUGREEV'S PLIGHT AND PLEDGED TO HELP HIM. HIS LONG ARMS THROBBED IN ANTICIPATION OF A FIGHT.
LISTEN, SUGREEV! I WILL SLAY VALI WITH A SINGLE ARROW. EVEN IF HE TRIES TO GET THE HELP OF THE GODS, HE WON'T ESCAPE!
IT'S A SIN TO EVEN LOOK AT SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T SYMPATHISE WITH A SAD FRIEND. ONE SHOULD REGARD ONE'S OWN TROUBLES AS A MERE DUST MITE, EVEN IF THEY ARE MOUNTAIN-LIKE. BUT A FRIEND'S TINIEST PROBLEM SHOULD BE REGARDED AS MOUNT SUMERU!
RELY ON ME, DEAR FRIEND. I WILL HELP YOU IN EVERY WAY.
VALI IS VERY STRONG! COME I WILL SHOW YOU THE PROOF OF HIS VALOUR.
SUGREEV LED RAM AND LAKSHMAN TO THE FOREST.
LOOK! THESE ARE THE REMAINS OF THE DEMON DUNDUBHI THAT VALI KILLED AND THREW HERE.
HE SHOWED RAM A ROW OF SEVEN PALM TREES.


WITH A SINGLE WELL-AIMED ARROW, RAM FELLED THE SEVEN TREES.
HE IS MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THE VALIANT VALI.
SUGREEV WAS CONVINCED OF RAM'S PROWESS AND FELT HIS TROUBLES WERE OVER.
THUS ASSURED OF RAM'S SUPPORT, SUGREEV WENT TO VALI TO CHALLENGE HIM TO A FIGHT.
VALI! VALI, COME OUT!
HUH? HOW DARE HE!
VALI WAS SURPRISED TO HEAR SUGREEV BELLOWING SO BRAVELY AND RAN OUT TO CONFRONT HIM.
NO! NO! LISTEN, MY LORD! DON'T BE SO HASTY.
HIS WIFE TARA CAUTIONED HIM NOT TO TAKE THE CHALLENGE.
SUGREEV IS NOT ALONE! HE HAS AS HIS ALLIES THE SONS OF DASHARATH, RAM AND LAKSHMAN.
OH! MY TIMID DARLING, DON'T WORRY.
HAH! I CAN BREAK THAT SUGREEV LIKE A DRY TWIG.
SUGREEV AND VALI MET LIKE TWO WRESTLERS IN A MATCH.
THUD
BOOM


VALI GAVE SUCH A VIOLENT BLOW TO SUGREEV THAT HE FELL HEADLONG AT A DISTANCE.
AHHH
THE FIST OF VALI FELT LIKE A BOLT OF LIGHTNING TO SUGREEV.
AHH! I'M DONE FOR! I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I, THAT VALI IS NO BROTHER OF MINE! HE IS DEATH INCARNATE.
RAM STROKED SUGREEV'S ACHING AND BRUISED BODY WITH A GENTLE HAND, AND HE FELT HALE AND HEARTY AGAIN.
WHY DIDN'T YOU HELP ME?
YOU TWO BROTHERS ARE SO SIMILAR! I COULD NOT SHOOT FOR FEAR THAT I MAY KILL YOU BY MISTAKE.
RAM URGED SUGREEV TO GO BACK AND FIGHT.
I'LL PUT THIS GARLAND AROUND YOUR NECK SO THAT I CAN TELL YOU BOTH APART!
GO ON!
THE TWO BROTHERS, VALI AND SUGREEV, WERE AGAIN LOCKED IN COMBAT.
RAM WATCHED THE FIGHT FROM BEHIND A TREE.
SUGREEV FOUGHT BRAVELY AND WAS, AT FIRST, MORE THAN A MATCH FOR VALI.
HE'S FIGHTING WELL NOW.


BUT SOON SUGREEV SEEMED TO LOSE HEART AND BEGAN TO LOSE OUT.
I MUST ACT QUICKLY NOW.
RAM'S WELL AIMED ARROW FOUND ITS MARK AND HIT VALI IN HIS HEART.
AHHHH!
VALI FELL TO THE GROUND, FATALLY WOUNDED.
BUT EVEN AS HE DREW HIS LAST BREATH, HE RAISED HIS EYES TO RAM. HE RECOGNISED THE LORD.
WHY AM I YOUR FOE AND SUGREEV YOUR FRIEND? WHY, RAM, WHY?
RAM'S HEART WAS FILLED WITH SORROW, BUT HE SPOKE HARSH WORDS.
LISTEN, YOU WRETCH! A YOUNGER BROTHER'S WIFE, A SISTER, A DAUGHTER-IN-LAW AND ONE'S OWN DAUGHTER ARE ALL ALIKE. WHOEVER CASTS AN EVIL EYE ON ANY OF THE FOUR CAN BE KILLED WITHOUT ANY SIN.
VALI REALISED HIS MISTAKE AND MADE A REQUEST -
MY SON ANGAD IS STRONG LIKE ME! TAKE HIM UNDER YOUR WING AND ACCEPT HIM.
I'LL DO SO.
THUS ASSURED, VALI GASPED HIS LAST BREATH. HIS DEATH BROUGHT ALL HIS SUBJECTS TOGETHER TO LAMENT THE LOSS OF THEIR LEADER.

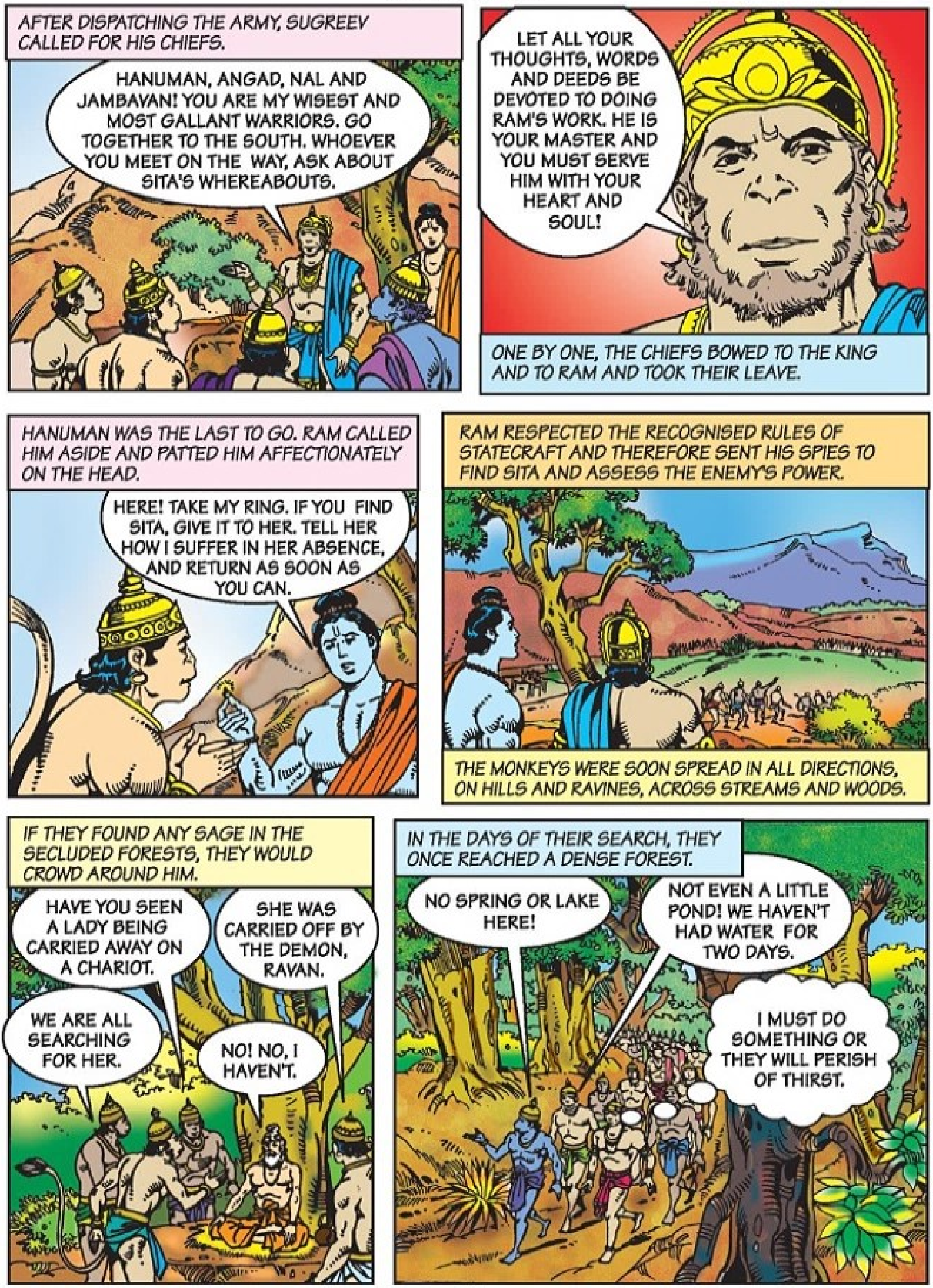

VALI'S WIFE TARA WAS INCONSOLABLE. WITH DISHEVELLED HAIR AND SHAKING FORM, SHE CRIED HELPLESSLY.
MADE UP OF FIVE ELEMENTS, EARTH, WATER, AIR, FIRE AND ETHER, THE BODY IS MORTAL. BUT THE SOUL IS IMPERISHABLE. FOR WHOM THEN DO YOU LAMENT?
SUGREEV THEN PERFORMED THE LAST RITES OF HIS BROTHER WITH DUE CEREMONY.
NOW LAKSHMAN, GO TO KISHKINDHA AND ARRANGE FOR THE CORONATION OF SUGREEV.
YES! I'LL DO SO AT ONCE.
OWING TO HIS VOWS OF STAYING IN THE FOREST FOR THE FOURTEEN YEARS OF HIS EXILE, RAM COULDN'T ENTER A CITY.
LAKSHMAN CALLED FOR AN ASSEMBLY OF THE BRAHMINS AND LEADING CITIZENS.
I DECLARE SUGREEV TO BE THE KING OF KISHKINDHA.
ANGAD WILL BE THE CROWN PRINCE.
LATER, RAM CALLED FOR SUGREEV AND INSTRUCTED HIM IN THE DIFFERENT PRINCIPLES OF STATECRAFT.
THE PRIMARY DUTY OF A KING IS THE WELFARE OF HIS SUBJECTS.
I AM HONOURED TO HAVE YOU AS MY TEACHER.
A FEW DAYS LATER, RAM NOTED THE CHANGE OF SEASONS AND REALISED THEY HAD TO CHANGE THEIR PLACE OF DWELLING.
THE SUMMER IS OVER AND THE RAINY SEASON HAS BEGUN. I CANNOT ENTER A VILLAGE OR TOWN FOR FOURTEEN YEARS. SO WE WILL STAY IN A HUT BY THE SIDE OF A ROCKY CAVE FOR THESE MONTHS.
IN THE HEAVY MONTHS OF THE RAINS, IT WAS INADVISABLE TO TRAVEL AND IT WAS COMMON FOR PEOPLE TO STAY AT ONE PLACE.
GO TO KISHKINDHA WITH ANGAD TO AID YOU, RULE WISELY AND WELL.
RAM AND LAKSHMAN SET UP THEIR HOME ON THE PRAVARSHAN HILLS.

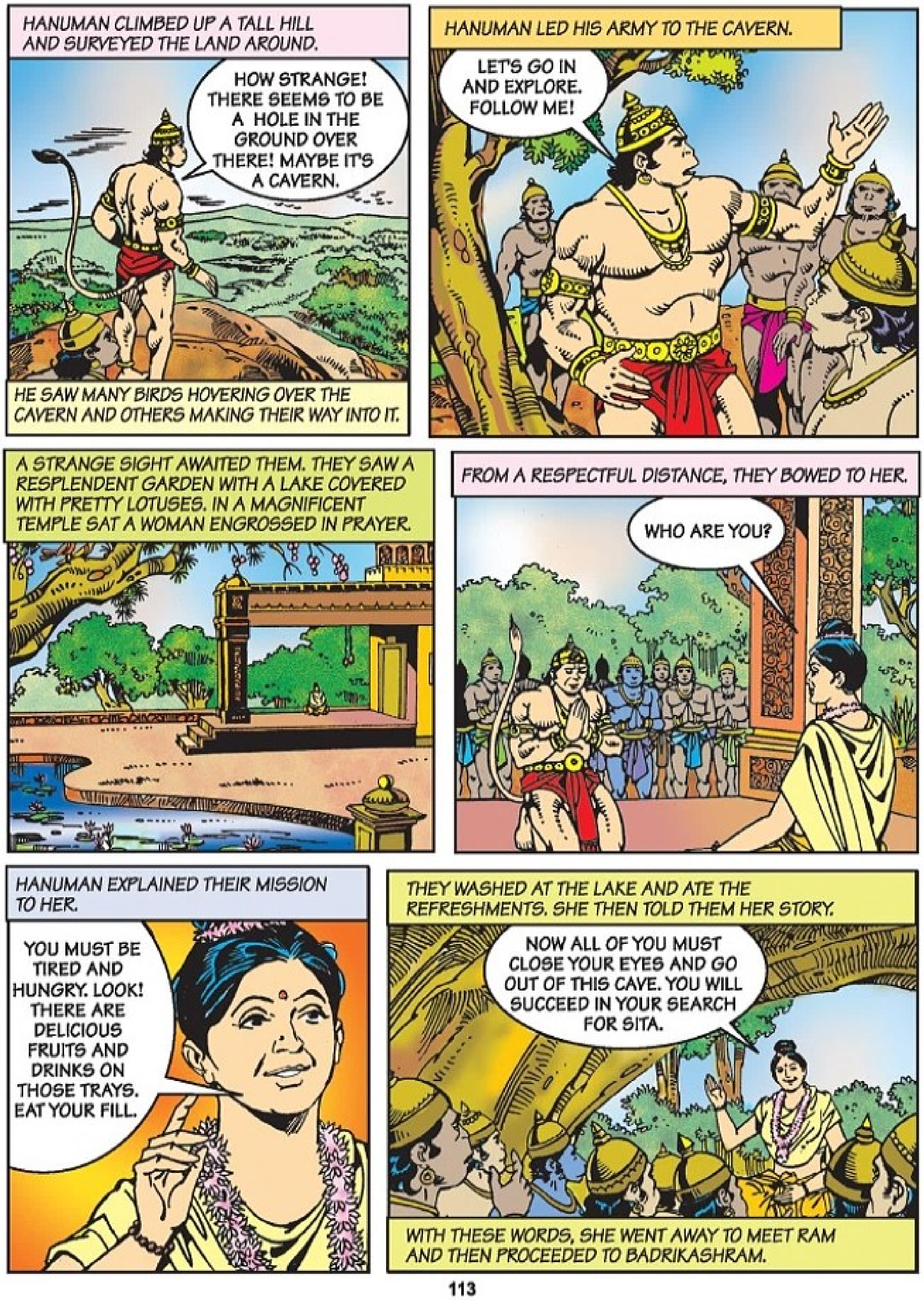

THERE WAS A CHARMING CAVE, CUT NATURALLY IN THE HILLSIDE.
WHAT A WONDERFUL PLACE THIS IS! SO LUSH IN GREENERY.
THERE ARE SO MANY FRUITS AND BULBS HERE.
THE CAVE PROTECTED THEM FROM HEAVY TORRENTIAL DOWNPOURS.
THE LOVELY FOREST, RICH AND SPLENDID, BECAME A PICTURE OF FELICITY SINCE RAM TOOK UP HIS RESIDENCE THERE. THE TWO BROTHERS SAT ON A BRIGHT AND GLISTENING CRYSTAL ROCK.
TELL ME ANOTHER TALE! I LOVE THE WAY YOU TEACH ME STATECRAFT AND SPIRITUALITY, CLEVERLY WRAPPED IN STORIES.
RAM NARRATED STORIES DEPICTING DEVOTION, DISPASSION, STATECRAFT AND SPIRITUAL WISDOM. THUS MANY DAYS PASSED IN COMPATIBLE CONVERSATION AND SIMPLE LIFE.
HOWEVER, THESE WERE DAYS WHEN THE SCENIC SURROUNDINGS MADE HIM PENSIVE.
LOOK! THE CLOUDS GATHERING OVERHEAD RUMBLE AND ROAR WITH SUCH MIGHT. BUT MY DARLING IS NOT HERE AND MY HEART IS FILLED WITH FEAR.
EVEN IN THE LYRICAL DESCRIPTIONS OF RAM THERE WAS WISDOM AND LEARNING.
LOOK HOW THE MOISTURE-LADEN CLOUDS DESCEND DOWN. LIKE THE LEARNED BEND WITH HUMILITY.
THE HILLS SILENTLY BEAR THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE RAINDROPS, AS GOOD MEN PUT UP WITH TAUNTS OF THE WICKED.
HIS WORDS HAD HUMOUR…
ON ALL SIDES, WE HEAR THE CROAKING OF FROGS AS DELIGHTFUL AS THE SOUND OF MANY BRAHMIN BOYS CHANTING THE VEDAS.
…AS WELL AS INSIGHT.
CLOTHED WITH BRIGHT NEW LEAVES, THE VARIOUS TREES LOOK AS CHEERFUL AND BRIGHT AS A SEEKER WHO HAS ATTAINED SPIRITUAL WISDOM.


THUS, THE RAINY DAYS WERE OVER AND IT WAS TIME FOR SHARAD OR AUTUMN SEASON.
HOW DO WE KNOW THE SEASONS HAVE CHANGED?
LOOK AT THE KANS GRASS WITH ITS WHITE FLOWERS CARPETING THE GROUND. IT'S THE SIGN OF RAINY SEASON'S OLD AGE! IN THE SKY, THE CONSTELLATION AGASTYA (CANOPUS) HAS RISEN AND THE KHANJAN BIRDS (WAGTAILS) HAVE APPEARED IN THE FOREST.
WITH THEIR LIVES CLOSELY ENTWINED TO NATURE, RAM AND LAKSHMAN REVELLED IN THE BEAUTY OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT. BUT THE CHANGE OF SEASON ALSO SIGNALLED THE TIME TO RESUME THEIR HUNT.
THE RAINS ARE OVER AND THE CLEAR SEASON OF AUTUMN IS HERE. YET I HAVE NO NEWS OF SITA. IF ONLY I KNEW WHERE SHE WAS.
HIS HEART WAS FILLED WITH FEAR.
I HOPE SHE IS ALIVE! NOW LOOK AT SUGREEV! HE WAS TO HELP ME. SINCE HE HAS GOT HIS KINGDOM AND TREASURY, COMFORT AND FAMILY, HE HAS QUITE FORGOTTEN ME.
LAKSHMAN HAD SELDOM SEEN THIS SIDE OF RAM.
HOW DARE HE DO SO? WITH THIS BOW THAT CAUSED VALI'S DEATH, I WILL KILL HIS FOOLISH BROTHER TOO.
OHH! HE IS FURIOUS! AND RIGHTLY SO!
LAKSHMAN SAW THE RAGE IN RAM AND TOOK UP HIS OWN BOW AND ARROW.
I'LL GO AND SEE THAT SUGREEV!
LAKSHMAN, REMEMBER, SUGREEV IS OUR FRIEND. JUST THREATEN HIM AND BRING HIM HERE. DON'T KILL HIM!
MEANWHILE IN KISHKINDHA, HANUMAN HAD THE SAME THOUGHTS.
SUGREEV, OUR KING, IS ENGROSSED IN HIS OWN WORLD! HE HAS FORGOTTEN HIS PROMISE TO RAM.

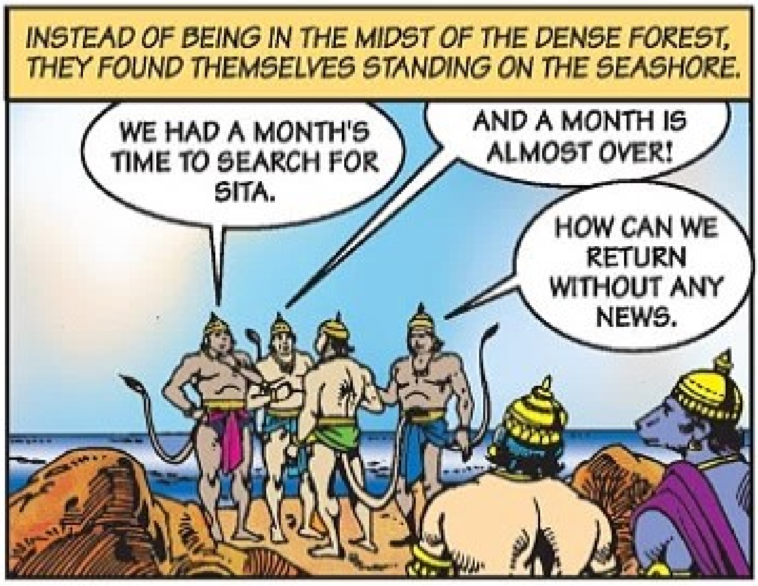

LIKE A GOOD MINISTER, HANUMAN USED ALL METHODS OF PERSUASION TO BRING SUGREEV ROUND.
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR PROMISE? THE SKIES HAVE CLEARED AND THE SEARCH FOR SITA SHOULD HAVE BEGUN BY NOW!
OH NO! I MUST HAVE BEEN OUT OF MY SENSES!
ONCE HE REALISED HIS MISTAKE, SUGREEV WAS QUICK TO ACT.
HANUMAN, SEND OUR ENVOYS TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF OUR MONKEY ARMY, WHEREVER THEY MAY BE. I WANT ALL OUR FORCES GATHERED HERE.
HANUMAN AT ONCE CALLED THE MONKEY ENVOYS.
YOU MUST GO AND SEARCH FOR ALL OUR MONKEY SOLDIERS. I WANT EACH OF THEM REPORTING HERE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. AND YOU MUST ALL RETURN IN A FORTNIGHT OR FACE DEATH. GO NOW. GO!
THE MONKEY ENVOYS BOWED TO HANUMAN. IT WAS AT THIS TIME THAT LAKSHMAN ENTERED THE CITY.
I WILL BURN THIS CITY TO CINDERS!
THE LOUD TWANG OF HIS BOW AND HIS THREAT MADE THE MONKEYS SCATTER IN ALL DIRECTIONS.
OHH! HE IS GOING TO USE THE FIRE MISSILE.
HE WILL DESTROY THE CITY.
HE IS ANGRY BECAUSE OUR KING BETRAYED HIS PROMISE.
ANGAD CAME FORWARD AND PLEADED WITH LAKSHMAN.
PLEASE SPARE US.
I HAVE GOOD REASON TO BE ANGRY!
LAKSHMAN PUT A PROTECTIVE ARM AROUND ANGADA, BUT HE WANTED SUGREEV TO GET THE MESSAGE.


SUGREEV CALLED HANUMAN AND ASKED HIM TO INTERVENE ON HIS BEHALF.
TAKE QUEEN TARA WITH YOU AND TRY TO CALM LAKSHMAN DOWN. THEN BRING HIM HERE WITH DUE HONOUR.
HANUMAN DID SO AND SOON ARRIVED WITH LAKSHMAN IN TOW.
SUGREEV APOLOGISED PROFUSELY AND HUMBLY TO LAKSHMAN.
PLEASURE AND ENJOYMENT ARE SO ADDICTIVE THAT I FORGOT MY PROMISE. FORGIVE ME IF YOU CAN.
LAKSHMAN WAS MOVED BY SUGREEV'S SINCERITY AND EMBRACED HIM WARMLY.
HANUMAN TOLD HIM HOW THE ARMY WAS BEING ALERTED.
OUR ENVOYS HAVE ALREADY GONE TO GATHER THE FORCES. THE SEARCH CAN BEGIN SOON!
THAT'S GOOD! COME, LET'S GO AND TELL RAM THIS GOOD NEWS.
SUGREEV APOLOGISED TO RAM TOO, AND WAS AT ONCE FORGIVEN.
YOU ARE AS DEAR TO ME AS MY LITTLE BROTHER, BHARAT! NOW, DO ALL YOU CAN TO FIND OUT WHERE SITA IS!
AS SOON AS MY ARMY IS RALLIED I WILL GET YOU INFORMATION ABOUT HER.
EVEN AS THEY WERE SPEAKING, THE FOREST BEGAN TO FILL WITH MONKEYS. THEY WERE ALL COLOURS AND SIZES, CONVERGING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS, MAKING AN ENORMOUS ARMY.
AT ONE WORD OF COMMAND FROM SUGREEV, THE DISORDERLY MOB OF MONKEYS FELL INTO A FORBIDDING MARTIAL FORMATION.
I ORDER YOU TO DO RAM'S WORK. EACH OF THE MONKEY GROUPS SHOULD GO IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION AND SEARCH FOR SITA. I GIVE YOU ONE MONTH FOR THIS TASK. RETURN WITHIN A MONTH OR FACE DEATH AT MY HANDS. NOW MARCH FORTH!

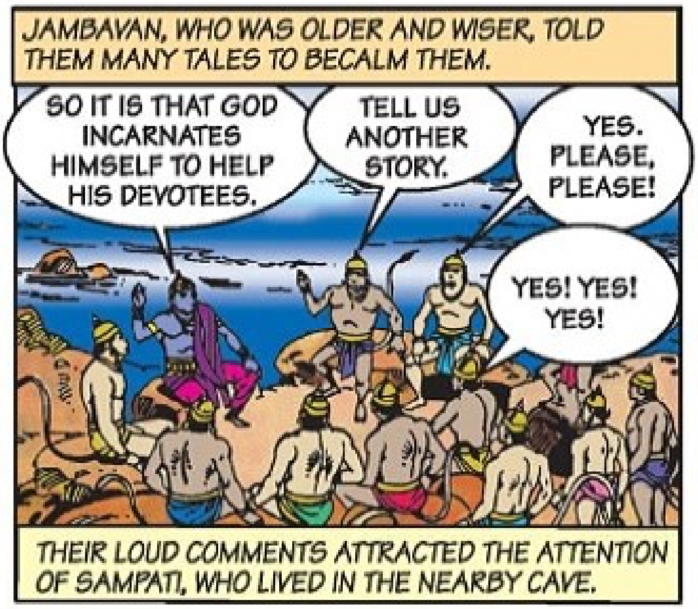

AFTER DISPATCHING THE ARMY, SUGREEV CALLED FOR HIS CHIEFS.
HANUMAN, ANGAD, NAL AND JAMBAVAN! YOU ARE MY WISEST AND MOST GALLANT WARRIORS. GO TOGETHER TO THE SOUTH. WHOEVER YOU MEET ON THE WAY, ASK ABOUT SITA'S WHEREABOUTS.
LET ALL YOUR THOUGHTS, WORDS AND DEEDS BE DEVOTED TO DOING RAM'S WORK. HE IS YOUR MASTER AND YOU MUST SERVE HIM WITH YOUR HEART AND SOUL!
ONE BY ONE, THE CHIEFS BOWED TO THE KING AND TO RAM AND TOOK THEIR LEAVE.
HANUMAN WAS THE LAST TO GO. RAM CALLED HIM ASIDE AND PATTED HIM AFFECTIONATELY ON THE HEAD.
HERE! TAKE MY RING. IF YOU FIND SITA, GIVE IT TO HER. TELL HER HOW I SUFFER IN HER ABSENCE, AND RETURN AS SOON AS YOU CAN.
RAM RESPECTED THE RECOGNISED RULES OF STATECRAFT AND THEREFORE SENT HIS SPIES TO FIND SITA AND ASSESS THE ENEMY'S POWER.
THE MONKEYS WERE SOON SPREAD IN ALL DIRECTIONS, ON HILLS AND RAVINES, ACROSS STREAMS AND WOODS.
IF THEY FOUND ANY SAGE IN THE SECLUDED FORESTS, THEY WOULD CROWD AROUND HIM.
HAVE YOU SEEN A LADY BEING CARRIED AWAY ON A CHARIOT.
SHE WAS CARRIED OFF BY THE DEMON, RAVAN.
WE ARE ALL SEARCHING FOR HER.
NO! NO, I HAVEN'T.
IN THE DAYS OF THEIR SEARCH, THEY ONCE REACHED A DENSE FOREST.
NO SPRING OR LAKE HERE!
NOT EVEN A LITTLE POND! WE HAVEN'T HAD WATER FOR TWO DAYS.
I MUST DO SOMETHING OR THEY WILL PERISH OF THIRST.

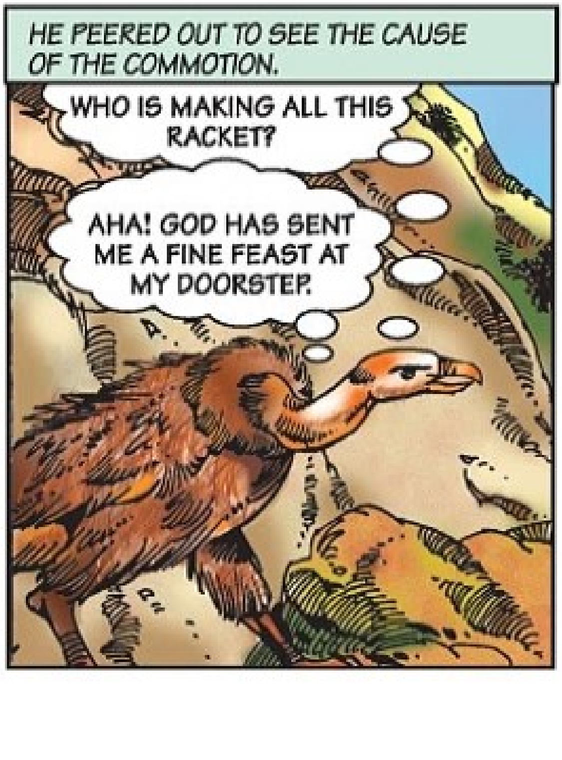

HANUMAN CLIMBED UP A TALL HILL AND SURVEYED THE LAND AROUND.
HOW STRANGE! THERE SEEMS TO BE A HOLE IN THE GROUND OVER THERE! MAYBE IT'S A CAVERN.
HE SAW MANY BIRDS HOVERING OVER THE CAVERN AND OTHERS MAKING THEIR WAY INTO IT.
HANUMAN LED HIS ARMY TO THE CAVERN.
LET'S GO IN AND EXPLORE. FOLLOW ME!
A STRANGE SIGHT AWAITED THEM. THEY SAW A RESPLENDENT GARDEN WITH A LAKE COVERED WITH PRETTY LOTUSES. IN A MAGNIFICENT TEMPLE SAT A WOMAN ENGROSSED IN PRAYER.
FROM A RESPECTFUL DISTANCE, THEY BOWED TO HER.
WHO ARE YOU?
HANUMAN EXPLAINED THEIR MISSION TO HER.
YOU MUST BE TIRED AND HUNGRY. LOOK! THERE ARE DELICIOUS FRUITS AND DRINKS ON THOSE TRAYS. EAT YOUR FILL.
THEY WASHED AT THE LAKE AND ATE THE REFRESHMENTS. SHE THEN TOLD THEM HER STORY.
NOW ALL OF YOU MUST CLOSE YOUR EYES AND GO OUT OF THIS CAVE. YOU WILL SUCCEED IN YOUR SEARCH FOR SITA.
WITH THESE WORDS, SHE WENT AWAY TO MEET RAM AND THEN PROCEEDED TO BADRIKASHRAM.

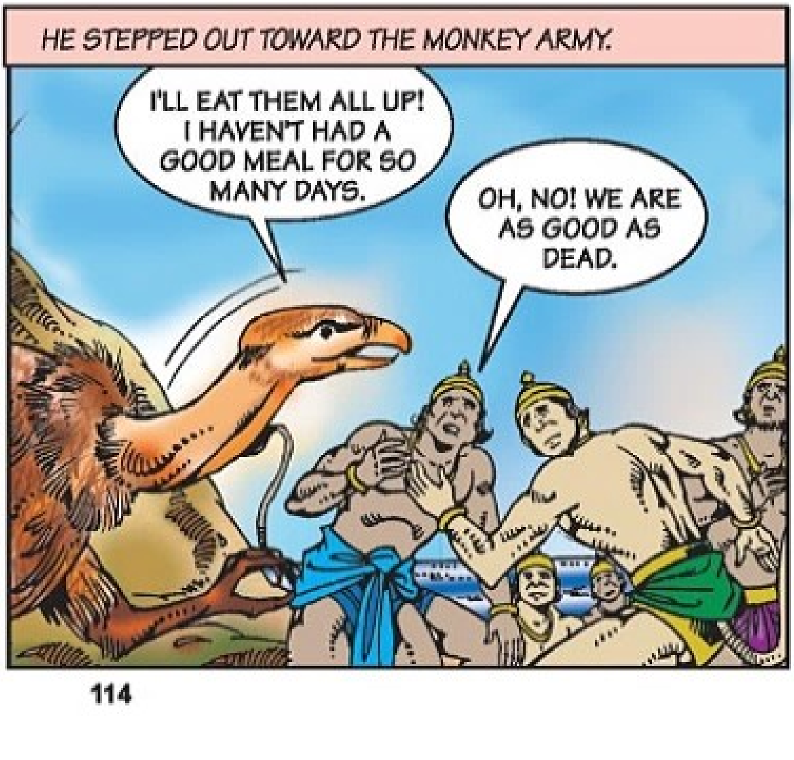

THEY DID AS TOLD.
CAN WE OPEN OUR EYES NOW?
YES! I THINK WE ARE OUT NOW.
BUT THEY WERE STUNNED TO SEE THE SIGHT BEFORE THEIR EYES.

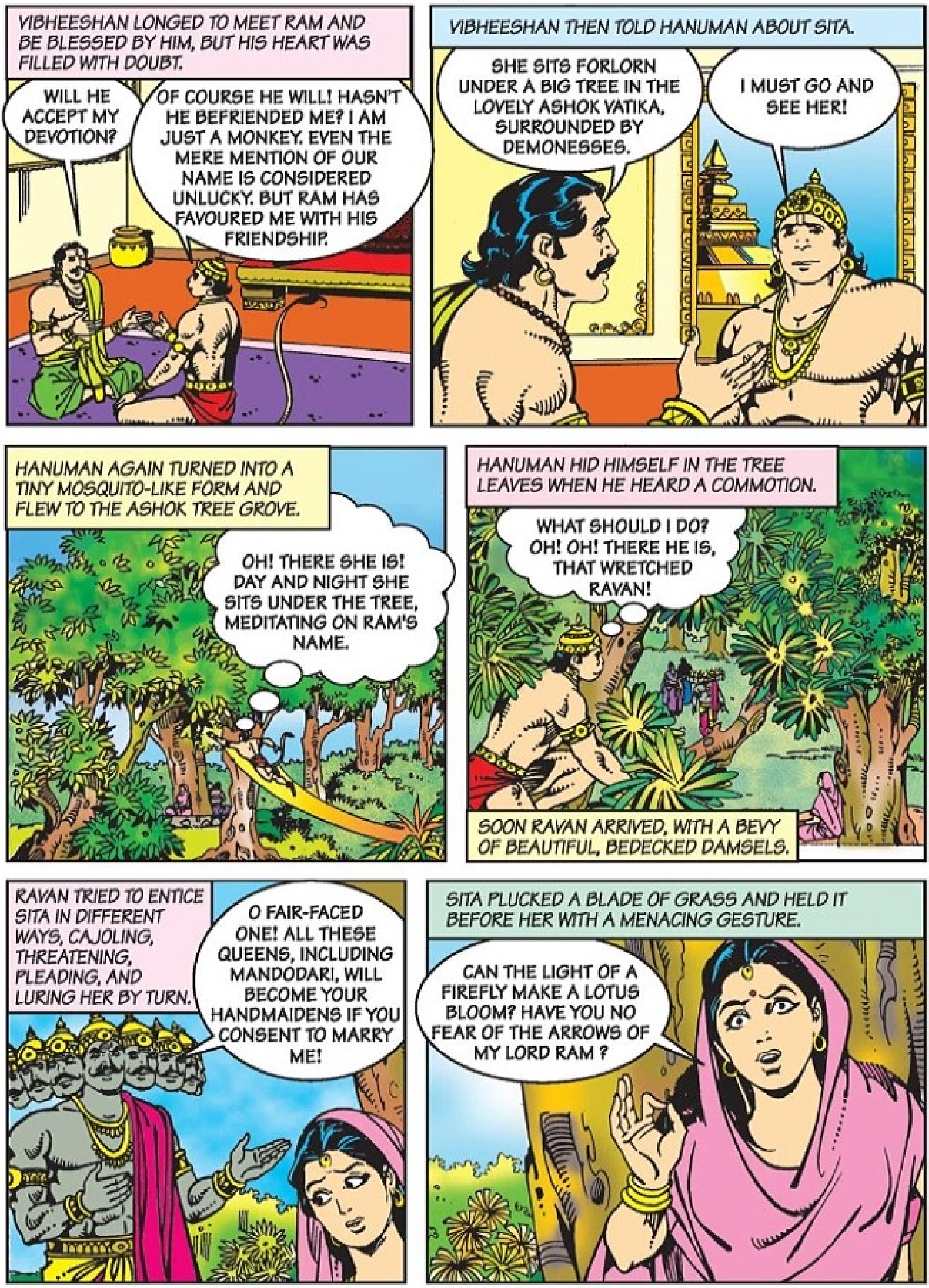

INSTEAD OF BEING IN THE MIDST OF THE DENSE FOREST, THEY FOUND THEMSELVES STANDING ON THE SEASHORE.
WE HAD A MONTH'S TIME TO SEARCH FOR SITA.
AND A MONTH IS ALMOST OVER!
HOW CAN WE RETURN WITHOUT ANY NEWS.


FOR HEROES LIKE ANGAD, FAILURE TO DO HIS DUTY WAS LIKE DEATH.
IF WE GO BACK, SUGREEV HAS SAID HE WILL KILL US. IT'S DEATH IN ANY CASE!
WE WON'T GO BACK! NOT TILL WE GET SOME NEWS.
THEY SPREAD KUSHA GRASS ON THE BEACH AND SAT THERE, STEEPED IN SORROW.

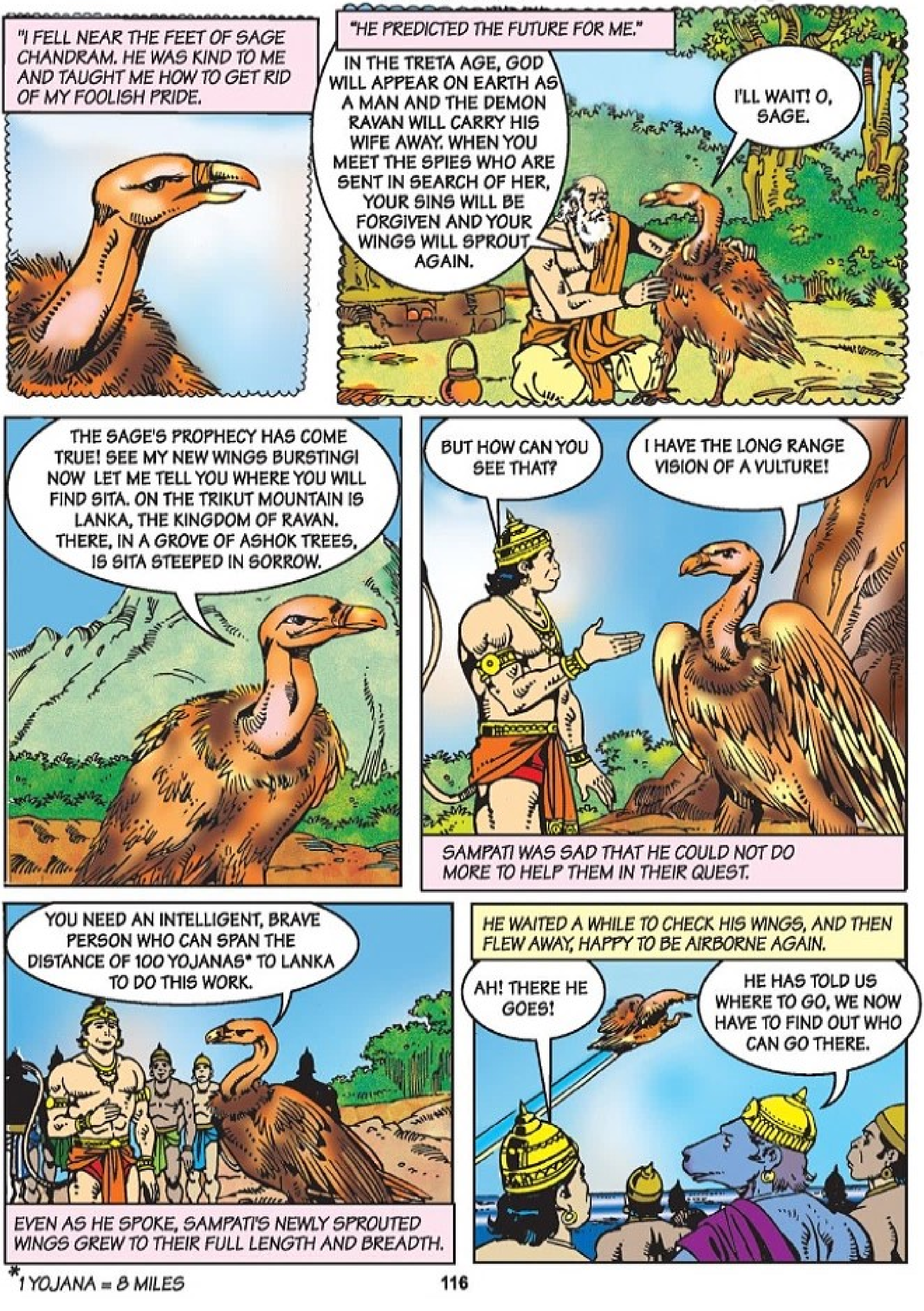

JAMBAVAN, WHO WAS OLDER AND WISER, TOLD THEM MANY TALES TO BECALM THEM.
SO IT IS THAT GOD INCARNATES HIMSELF TO HELP HIS DEVOTEES.
TELL US ANOTHER STORY.
YES. PLEASE, PLEASE!
YES! YES! YES!
THEIR LOUD COMMENTS ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF SAMPATI, WHO LIVED IN THE NEARBY CAVE.


HE PEERED OUT TO SEE THE CAUSE OF THE COMMOTION.
WHO IS MAKING ALL THIS RACKET?
AHA! GOD HAS SENT ME A FINE FEAST AT MY DOORSTEP.

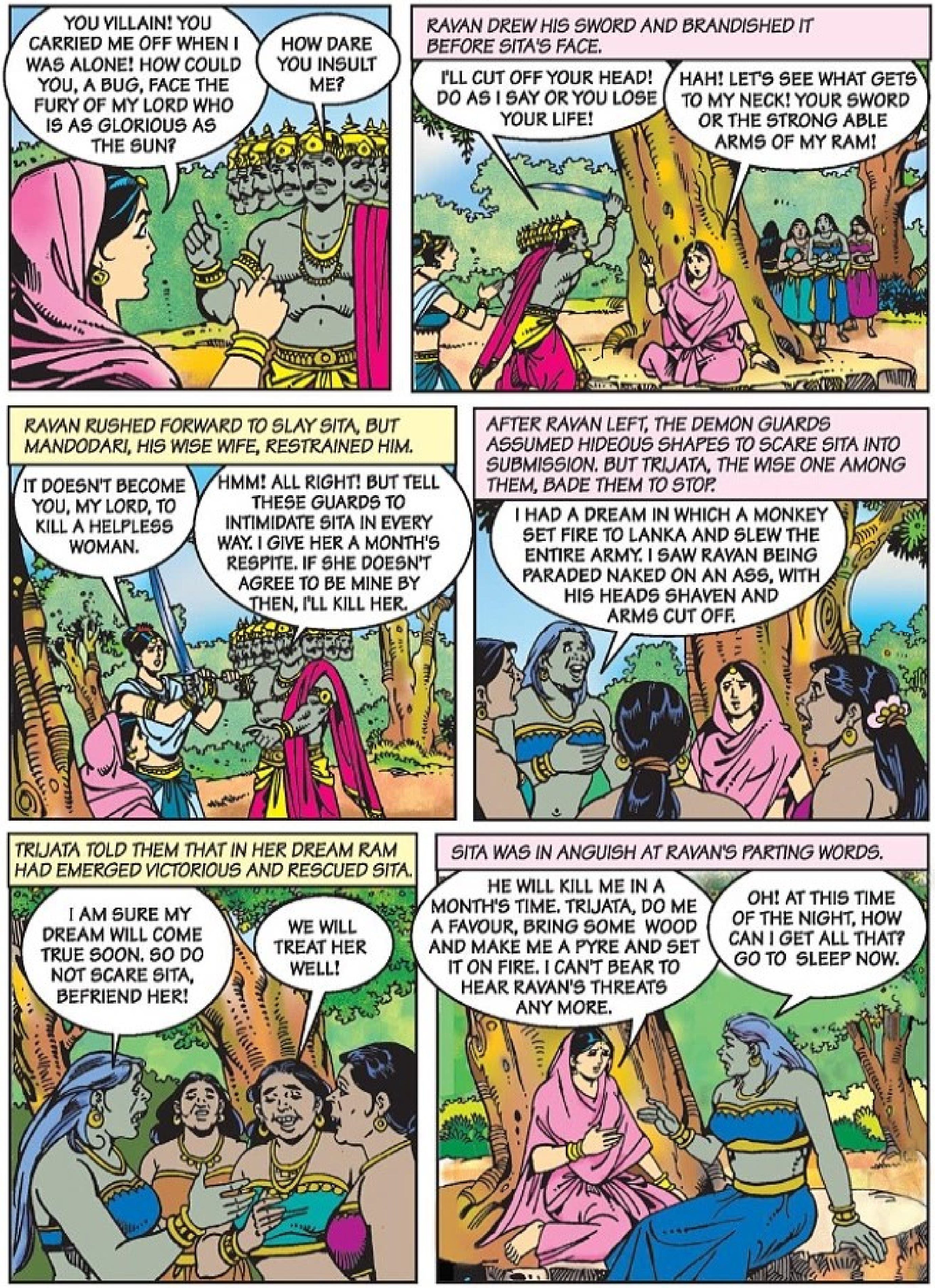

HE STEPPED OUT TOWARD THE MONKEY ARMY.
I'LL EAT THEM ALL UP! I HAVEN'T HAD A GOOD MEAL FOR SO MANY DAYS.
OH, NO! WE ARE AS GOOD AS DEAD.


VIBHEESHAN LONGED TO MEET RAM AND BE BLESSED BY HIM, BUT HIS HEART WAS FILLED WITH DOUBT.
WILL HE ACCEPT MY DEVOTION?
OF COURSE HE WILL! HASN'T HE BEFRIENDED ME? I AM JUST A MONKEY. EVEN THE MERE MENTION OF OUR NAME IS CONSIDERED UNLUCKY. BUT RAM HAS FAVOURED ME WITH HIS FRIENDSHIP.
VIBHEESHAN THEN TOLD HANUMAN ABOUT SITA.
SHE SITS FORLORN UNDER A BIG TREE IN THE LOVELY ASHOK VATIKA, SURROUNDED BY DEMONESSES.
I MUST GO AND SEE HER!
HANUMAN AGAIN TURNED INTO A TINY MOSQUITO-LIKE FORM AND FLEW TO THE ASHOK TREE GROVE.
OH! THERE SHE IS! DAY AND NIGHT SHE SITS UNDER THE TREE, MEDITATING ON RAM'S NAME.
HANUMAN HID HIMSELF IN THE TREE LEAVES WHEN HE HEARD A COMMOTION.
WHAT SHOULD I DO? OH! OH! THERE HE IS, THAT WRETCHED RAVAN!
SOON RAVAN ARRIVED, WITH A BEVY OF BEAUTIFUL, BEDECKED DAMSELS.
RAVAN TRIED TO ENTICE SITA IN DIFFERENT WAYS, CAJOLING, THREATENING, PLEADING, AND LURING HER BY TURN.
O FAIR-FACED ONE! ALL THESE QUEENS, INCLUDING MANDODARI, WILL BECOME YOUR HANDMAIDENS IF YOU CONSENT TO MARRY ME!
SITA PLUCKED A BLADE OF GRASS AND HELD IT BEFORE HER WITH A MENACING GESTURE.
CAN THE LIGHT OF A FIREFLY MAKE A LOTUS BLOOM? HAVE YOU NO FEAR OF THE ARROWS OF MY LORD RAM ?

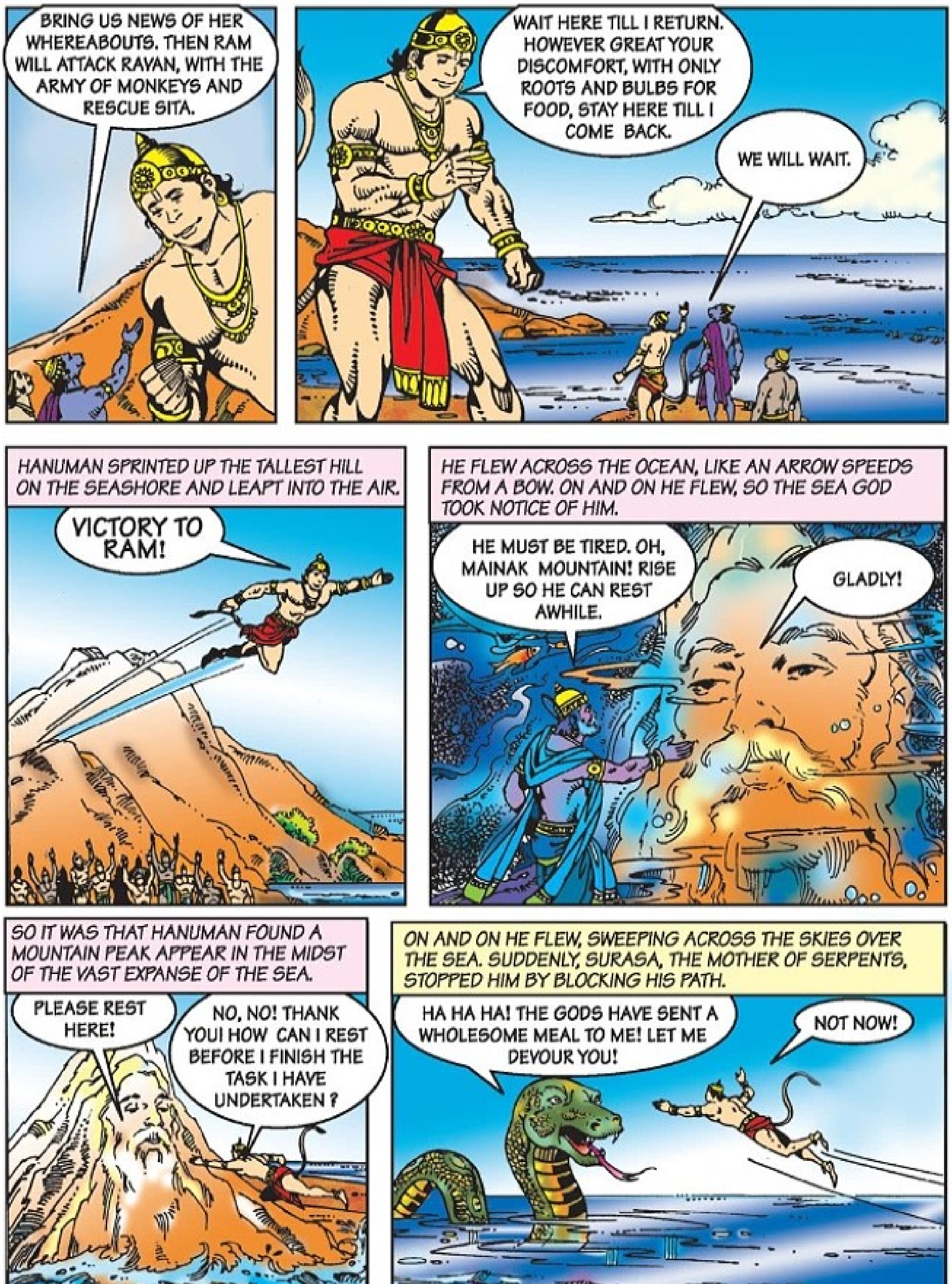

SEEING THEIR MONKEY ARMY PETRIFIED WITH FEAR, ANGAD THOUGHT OF A CLEVER PLOY.
SAMPATI IS THE ELDER BROTHER OF JATAYU.
GLORY TO JATAYU! BLESSED IS HE TO HAVE SERVED OUR MASTER RAM AND LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIM.
AS ANGAD HAD EXPECTED, THE MENTION OF HIS BROTHER MADE SAMPATI STOP IN MID-STRIDE AS HE WAS ABOUT TO STRIKE UPON THE MONKEYS.
A E E E !!
HUSH! I WON'T HURT YOU.
CHUKKA CHUKA!
HE ASKED ANGAD ABOUT JATAYU.
WHAT HAPPENED TO JATAYU?
HE TRIED TO PREVENT RAVAN FROM TAKING SITA AWAY, BUT LOST HIS LIFE.
ANGAD TOLD HIM ABOUT RAM'S FRIENDSHIP WITH JATAYU.
SAMPATI REQUESTED THEM TO CARRY HIM TO THE SEA TO PERFORM THE LAST RITES FOR JATAYU.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR WINGS!
IT'S A LONG STORY. ONCE, WHEN WE WERE YOUNG, JATAYU AND I TRIED TO FLY TOWARDS THE SUN.
OHH! IT'S TOO HOT. I'M GOING BACK, SAMPATI.
I'LL GO AHEAD! I CAN'T GIVE UP!
"HOWEVER, SOON MY WINGS WERE SCORCHED BY THE SUN'S RAYS AND I FELL TO THE EARTH WITH A FEARFUL SCREAM.
WHAT'S THIS?

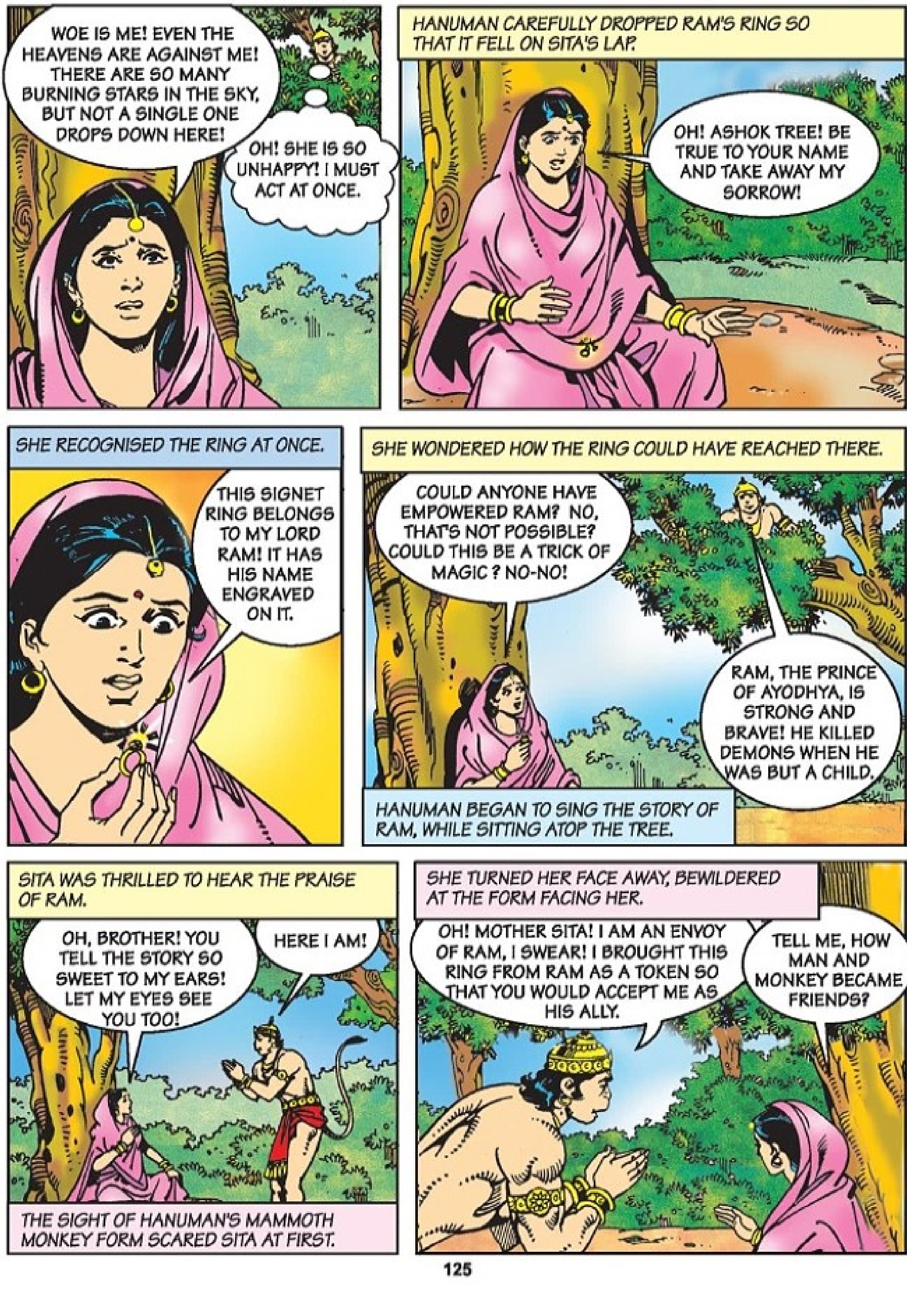


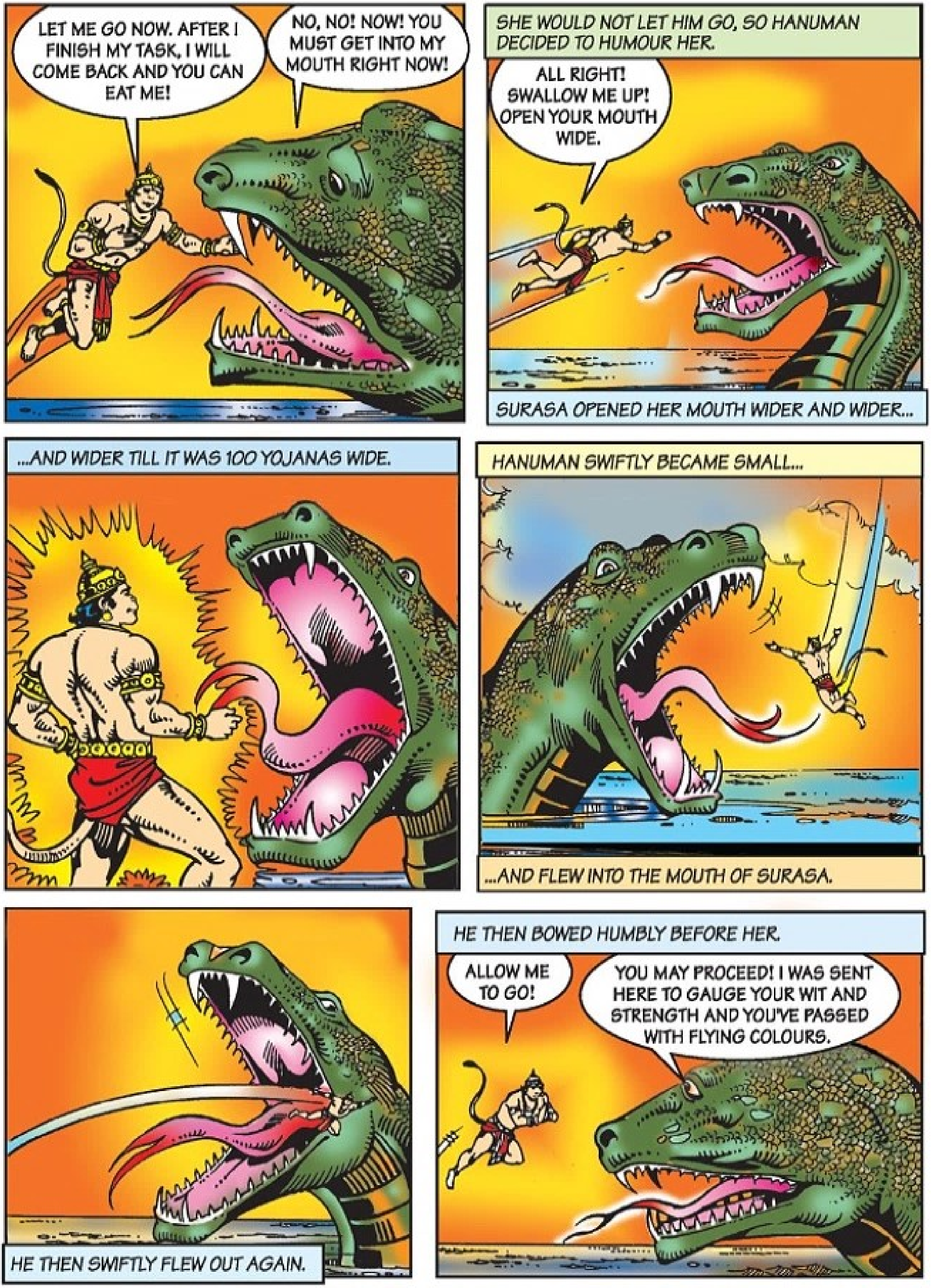
*1 YOJANA = 8 MILES


YOU VILLAIN! YOU CARRIED ME OFF WHEN I WAS ALONE! HOW COULD YOU, A BUG, FACE THE FURY OF MY LORD WHO IS AS GLORIOUS AS THE SUN?
HOW DARE YOU INSULT ME?
RAVAN DREW HIS SWORD AND BRANDISHED IT BEFORE SITA'S FACE.
I'LL CUT OFF YOUR HEAD! DO AS I SAY OR YOU LOSE YOUR LIFE!
HAH! LET'S SEE WHAT GETS TO MY NECK! YOUR SWORD OR THE STRONG ABLE ARMS OF MY RAM!
RAVAN RUSHED FORWARD TO SLAY SITA, BUT MANDODARI, HIS WISE WIFE, RESTRAINED HIM.
IT DOESN'T BECOME YOU, MY LORD, TO KILL A HELPLESS WOMAN.
HMM! ALL RIGHT! BUT TELL THESE GUARDS TO INTIMIDATE SITA IN EVERY WAY. I GIVE HER A MONTH'S RESPITE. IF SHE DOESN'T AGREE TO BE MINE BY THEN, I'LL KILL HER.
AFTER RAVAN LEFT, THE DEMON GUARDS ASSUMED HIDEOUS SHAPES TO SCARE SITA INTO SUBMISSION. BUT TRIJATA, THE WISE ONE AMONG THEM, BADE THEM TO STOP.
I HAD A DREAM IN WHICH A MONKEY SET FIRE TO LANKA AND SLEW THE ENTIRE ARMY. I SAW RAVAN BEING PARADED NAKED ON AN ASS, WITH HIS HEADS SHAVEN AND ARMS CUT OFF.
TRIJATA TOLD THEM THAT IN HER DREAM RAM HAD EMERGED VICTORIOUS AND RESCUED SITA.
I AM SURE MY DREAM WILL COME TRUE SOON. SO DO NOT SCARE SITA, BEFRIEND HER!
WE WILL TREAT HER WELL!
SITA WAS IN ANGUISH AT RAVAN'S PARTING WORDS.
HE WILL KILL ME IN A MONTH'S TIME. TRIJATA, DO ME A FAVOUR, BRING SOME WOOD AND MAKE ME A PYRE AND SET IT ON FIRE. I CAN'T BEAR TO HEAR RAVAN'S THREATS ANY MORE.
OH! AT THIS TIME OF THE NIGHT, HOW CAN I GET ALL THAT? GO TO SLEEP NOW.

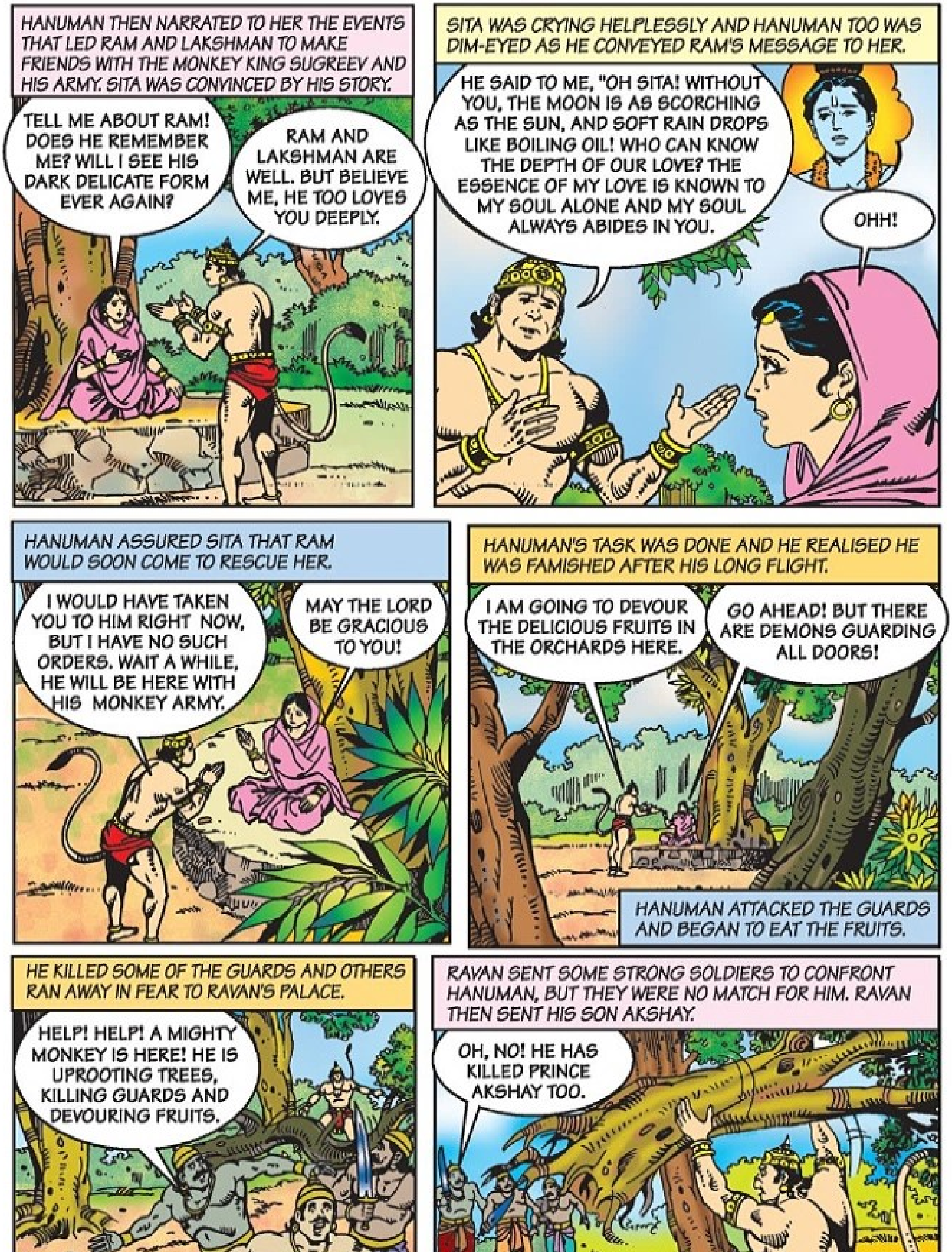

I AM OLD NOW AND NOT AS STRONG AS I WAS. IN MY YOUNGER DAYS, I COULD DO THE IMPOSSIBLE!
I THINK I CAN LEAP ACROSS…
…BUT I AM NOT SURE OF GETTING BACK AGAIN.
IN ANY CASE, WE CANNOT BUT I AM NOT SURE! YOU ARE THE LEADER OF THIS GROUP.
IT WAS ANGAD.
JAMBAVAN TURNED TO HANUMAN.
WHY ARE YOU SILENT, HANUMAN? YOU ARE BRAVE, STRONG AND SWIFT LIKE YOUR FATHER, THE WIND GOD, VAYU. YOU ARE A VERITABLE STOREHOUSE OF INTELLIGENCE, DISCRETION AND KNOWLEDGE.
YES, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU!
HANUMAN WAS ENCOURAGED BY THEIR PRAISE, AND BEGAN TO GROW IN SIZE.
SOON HE WAS AS TALL AS A MOUNTAIN.
GLOWING LIKE GOLD AND AS IMPOSING AS MOUNT SUMERU, HANUMAN ROARED LIKE A LION.
I CAN CROSS THIS SALTY SEA EASILY! IT'S CHILD'S PLAY FOR ME.
I CAN KILL RAVAN AND ALL HIS MEN. I CAN UPROOT MOUNT TRIKUT AND BRING IT HERE! I CAN DO IT ALL! BUT TELL ME, JAMBAVAN, WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE?
HMM! JUST GO THERE AND SEE IF YOU CAN SPOT SITA.

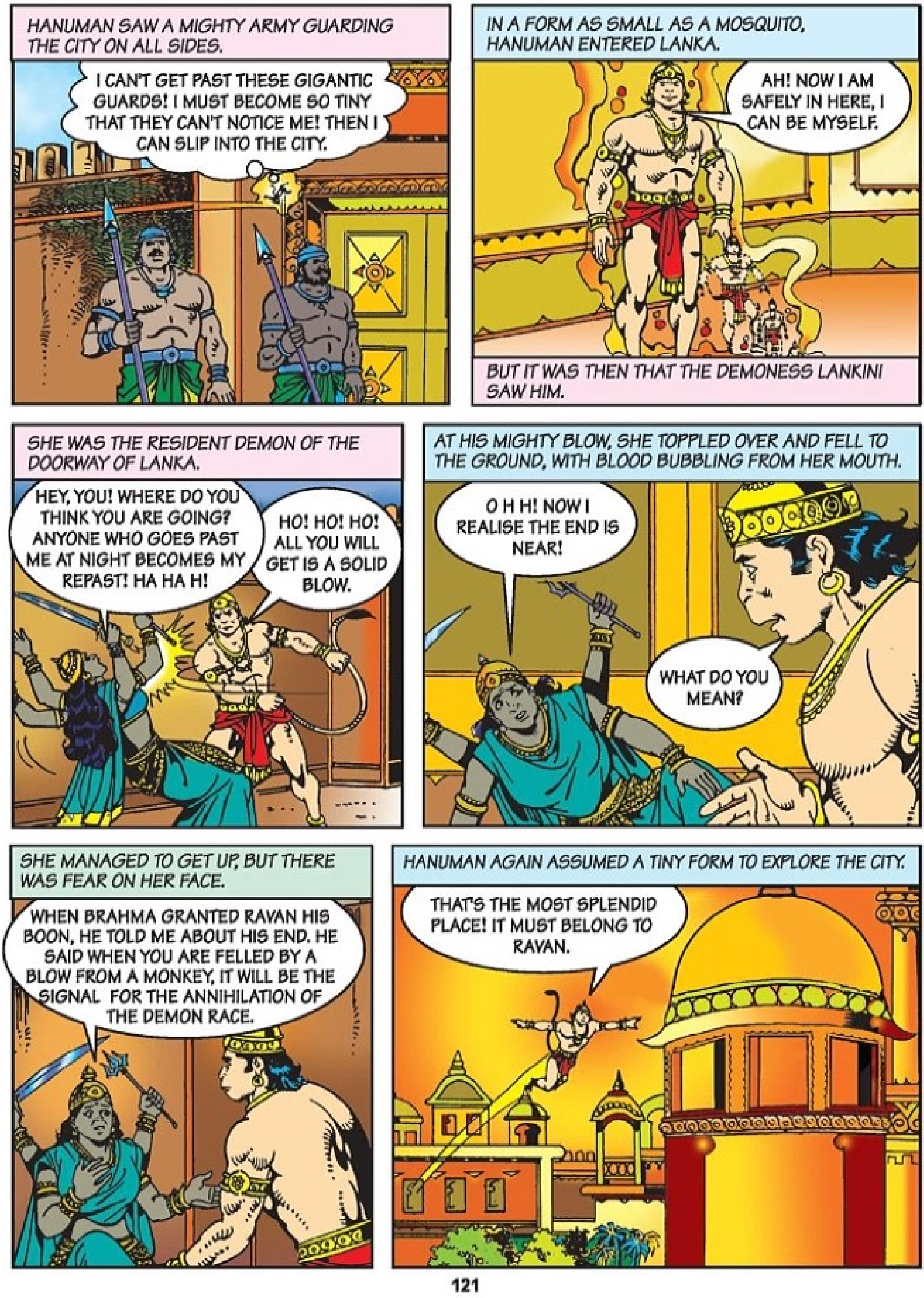

BRING US NEWS OF HER WHEREABOUTS. THEN RAM WILL ATTACK RAVAN, WITH THE ARMY OF MONKEYS AND RESCUE SITA.
WAIT HERE TILL I RETURN. HOWEVER GREAT YOUR DISCOMFORT, WITH ONLY ROOTS AND BULBS FOR FOOD, STAY HERE TILL I COME BACK.
WE WILL WAIT.
HANUMAN SPRINTED UP THE TALLEST HILL ON THE SEASHORE AND LEAPT INTO THE AIR.
VICTORY TO RAM!
HE FLEW ACROSS THE OCEAN, LIKE AN ARROW SPEEDS FROM A BOW. ON AND ON HE FLEW, SO THE SEA GOD TOOK NOTICE OF HIM.
HE MUST BE TIRED. OH, MAINAK MOUNTAIN! RISE UP SO HE CAN REST AWHILE.
GLADLY!
SO IT WAS THAT HANUMAN FOUND A MOUNTAIN PEAK APPEAR IN THE MIDST OF THE VAST EXPANSE OF THE SEA.
PLEASE REST HERE!
NO, NO! THANK YOU! HOW CAN I REST BEFORE I FINISH THE TASK I HAVE UNDERTAKEN ?
ON AND ON HE FLEW, SWEEPING ACROSS THE SKIES OVER THE SEA. SUDDENLY, SURASA, THE MOTHER OF SERPENTS, STOPPED HIM BY BLOCKING HIS PATH.
HA HA HA! THE GODS HAVE SENT A WHOLESOME MEAL TO ME! LET ME DEVOUR YOU!
NOT NOW!

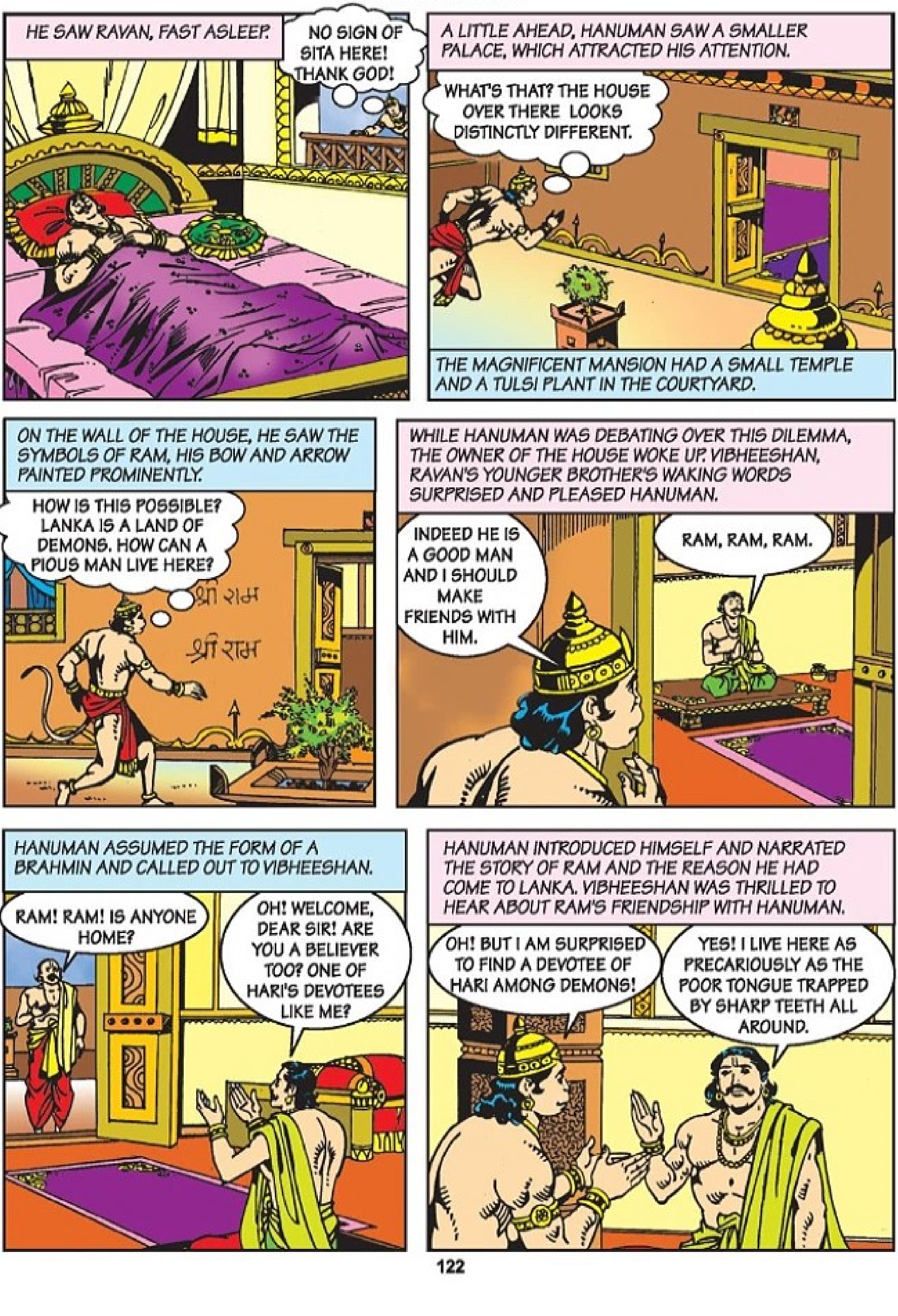

WOE IS ME! EVEN THE HEAVENS ARE AGAINST ME! THERE ARE SO MANY BURNING STARS IN THE SKY, BUT NOT A SINGLE ONE DROPS DOWN HERE!
OH! SHE IS SO UNHAPPY! I MUST ACT AT ONCE.
HANUMAN CAREFULLY DROPPED RAM'S RING SO THAT IT FELL ON SITA'S LAP.
OH! ASHOK TREE! BE TRUE TO YOUR NAME AND TAKE AWAY MY SORROW!
SHE RECOGNISED THE RING AT ONCE.
THIS SIGNET RING BELONGS TO MY LORD RAM! IT HAS HIS NAME ENGRAVED ON IT.
SHE WONDERED HOW THE RING COULD HAVE REACHED THERE.
COULD ANYONE HAVE EMPOWERED RAM? NO, THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE? COULD THIS BE A TRICK OF MAGIC ? NO-NO!
RAM, THE PRINCE OF AYODHYA, IS STRONG AND BRAVE! HE KILLED DEMONS WHEN HE WAS BUT A CHILD.
HANUMAN BEGAN TO SING THE STORY OF RAM, WHILE SITTING ATOP THE TREE.
SITA WAS THRILLED TO HEAR THE PRAISE OF RAM.
OH, BROTHER! YOU TELL THE STORY SO SWEET TO MY EARS! LET MY EYES SEE YOU TOO!
HERE I AM!
THE SIGHT OF HANUMAN'S MAMMOTH MONKEY FORM SCARED SITA AT FIRST.
SHE TURNED HER FACE AWAY, BEWILDERED AT THE FORM FACING HER.
OH! MOTHER SITA! I AM AN ENVOY OF RAM, I SWEAR! I BROUGHT THIS RING FROM RAM AS A TOKEN SO THAT YOU WOULD ACCEPT ME AS HIS ALLY.
TELL ME, HOW MAN AND MONKEY BECAME FRIENDS?


LET ME GO NOW. AFTER I FINISH MY TASK, I WILL COME BACK AND YOU CAN EAT ME!
NO, NO! NOW! YOU MUST GET INTO MY MOUTH RIGHT NOW!
SHE WOULD NOT LET HIM GO, SO HANUMAN DECIDED TO HUMOUR HER.
ALL RIGHT! SWALLOW ME UP! OPEN YOUR MOUTH WIDE.
SURASA OPENED HER MOUTH WIDER AND WIDER...
...AND WIDER TILL IT WAS 100 YOJANAS WIDE.
HANUMAN SWIFTLY BECAME SMALL...
...AND FLEW INTO THE MOUTH OF SURASA.
HE THEN SWIFTLY FLEW OUT AGAIN.
HE THEN BOWED HUMBLY BEFORE HER.
ALLOW ME TO GO!
YOU MAY PROCEED! I WAS SENT HERE TO GAUGE YOUR WIT AND STRENGTH AND YOU'VE PASSED WITH FLYING COLOURS.

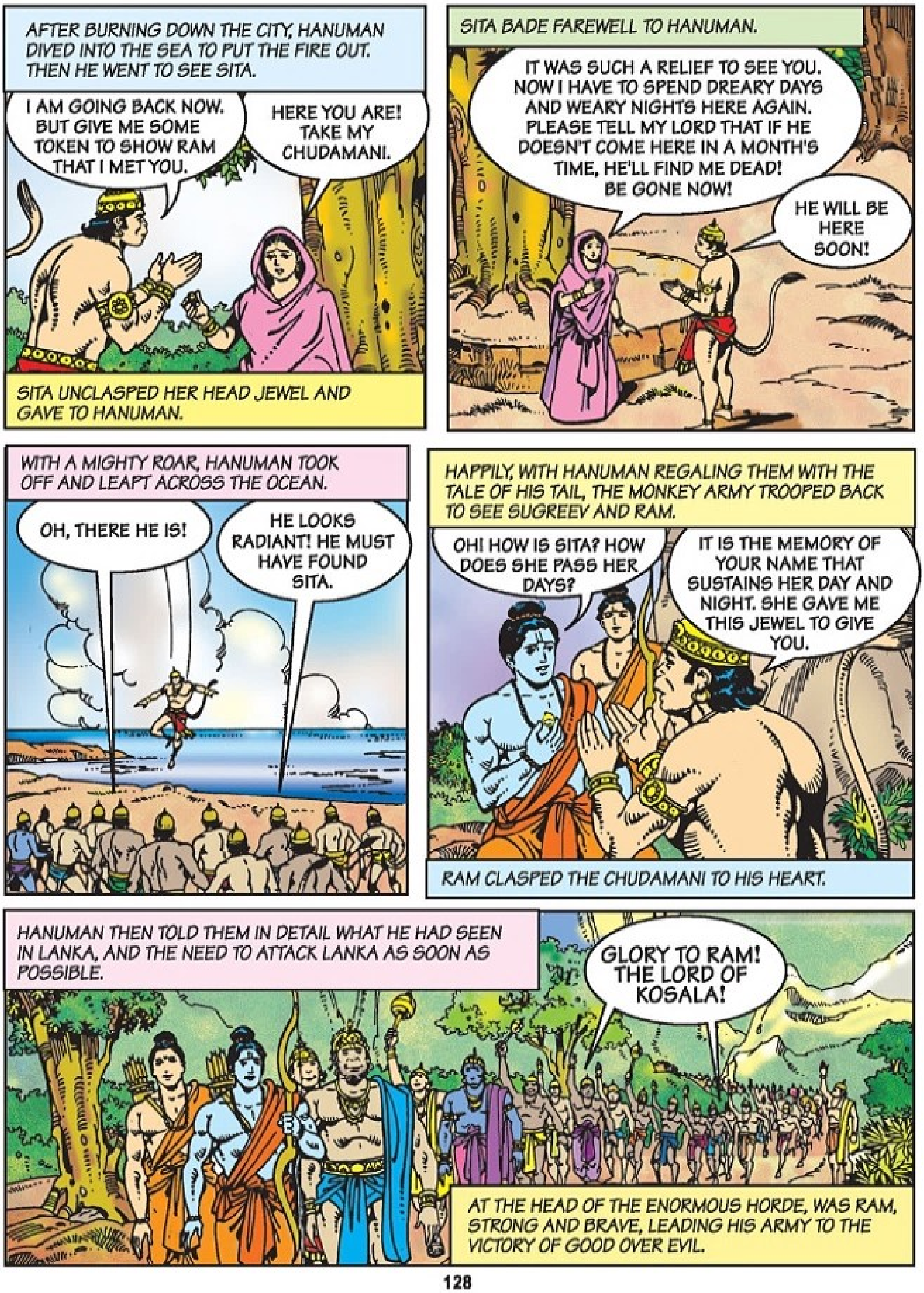

CHEERFULLY SHE BADE HIM FAREWELL.
MAY YOU SUCCEED IN YOUR MISSION!
HANUMAN JOYFULLY RESUMED HIS JOURNEY THROUGH THE SKIES. BUT HIS TROUBLES WERE NOT YET OVER.
IN THE DEPTH OF THE SEA, THERE DWELT A DEADLY DEMONESS.
SEEING THE REFLECTION OF FLYING CREATURES ON THE SEAWATER, SHE WOULD GRAB THEIR SHADOWS AND SUSPEND THEIR FLIGHT.
IN THIS CURIOUS MANNER, SHE ALWAYS HAD A FULL MEAL OF FEATHERED CREATURES.
WHEN SHE SAW HANUMAN, SHE WAS THRILLED AT THE MIGHTY TREAT SHE'D HAVE.
BUT HANUMAN SAW THROUGH HER TRICKERY AND ESCAPED UNSCATHED.
AT LAST HE REACHED ACROSS THE STRETCH OF THE SEA.
AH! LAND AT LAST! AND WHAT A RESPLENDENT LAND IT IS!
THERE WERE LOVELY WOODS NEAR THE SPARKLING BEACH.
TO GET A GOOD VIEW, HANUMAN CLIMBED UP A TALL HILL. FROM THERE HE SURVEYED LANKA STRETCHED BEFORE HIM.
THERE'S A SPLENDID FORT WITH RAMPARTS OF GOLD. INSIDE IT IS A CITY WITH WONDERFUL ROADS, MARKETS, AND SQUARES. I CAN SEE A LOT OF CHARIOTS AND HORSES TOO!


HANUMAN THEN NARRATED TO HER THE EVENTS THAT LED RAM AND LAKSHMAN TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH THE MONKEY KING SUGREEV AND HIS ARMY. SITA WAS CONVINCED BY HIS STORY.
TELL ME ABOUT RAM! DOES HE REMEMBER ME? WILL I SEE HIS DARK DELICATE FORM EVER AGAIN?
RAM AND LAKSHMAN ARE WELL. BUT BELIEVE ME, HE TOO LOVES YOU DEEPLY.
SITA WAS CRYING HELPLESSLY AND HANUMAN TOO WAS DIM-EYED AS HE CONVEYED RAM'S MESSAGE TO HER.
HE SAID TO ME, "OH SITA! WITHOUT YOU, THE MOON IS AS SCORCHING AS THE SUN, AND SOFT RAIN DROPS LIKE BOILING OIL! WHO CAN KNOW THE DEPTH OF OUR LOVE? THE ESSENCE OF MY LOVE IS KNOWN TO MY SOUL ALONE AND MY SOUL ALWAYS ABIDES IN YOU.
OHH!
HANUMAN ASSURED SITA THAT RAM WOULD SOON COME TO RESCUE HER.
I WOULD HAVE TAKEN YOU TO HIM RIGHT NOW, BUT I HAVE NO SUCH ORDERS. WAIT A WHILE, HE WILL BE HERE WITH HIS MONKEY ARMY.
MAY THE LORD BE GRACIOUS TO YOU!
HANUMAN'S TASK WAS DONE AND HE REALISED HE WAS FAMISHED AFTER HIS LONG FLIGHT.
I AM GOING TO DEVOUR THE DELICIOUS FRUITS IN THE ORCHARDS HERE.
GO AHEAD! BUT THERE ARE DEMONS GUARDING ALL DOORS!
HANUMAN ATTACKED THE GUARDS AND BEGAN TO EAT THE FRUITS.
HE KILLED SOME OF THE GUARDS AND OTHERS RAN AWAY IN FEAR TO RAVAN'S PALACE.
HELP! HELP! A MIGHTY MONKEY IS HERE! HE IS UPROOTING TREES, KILLING GUARDS AND DEVOURING FRUITS.
RAVAN SENT SOME STRONG SOLDIERS TO CONFRONT HANUMAN, BUT THEY WERE NO MATCH FOR HIM. RAVAN THEN SENT HIS SON AKSHAY.
OH, NO! HE HAS KILLED PRINCE AKSHAY TOO.


HANUMAN SAW A MIGHTY ARMY GUARDING THE CITY ON ALL SIDES.
I CAN'T GET PAST THESE GIGANTIC GUARDS! I MUST BECOME SO TINY THAT THEY CAN'T NOTICE ME! THEN I CAN SLIP INTO THE CITY.
IN A FORM AS SMALL AS A MOSQUITO, HANUMAN ENTERED LANKA.
AH! NOW I AM SAFELY IN HERE, I CAN BE MYSELF.
BUT IT WAS THEN THAT THE DEMONESS LANKINI SAW HIM.
SHE WAS THE RESIDENT DEMON OF THE DOORWAY OF LANKA.
HEY, YOU! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU ARE GOING? ANYONE WHO GOES PAST ME AT NIGHT BECOMES MY REPAST! HA HA H!
HO! HO! HO! ALL YOU WILL GET IS A SOLID BLOW.
AT HIS MIGHTY BLOW, SHE TOPPLED OVER AND FELL TO THE GROUND, WITH BLOOD BUBBLING FROM HER MOUTH.
O H H! NOW I REALISE THE END IS NEAR!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
SHE MANAGED TO GET UP, BUT THERE WAS FEAR ON HER FACE.
WHEN BRAHMA GRANTED RAVAN HIS BOON, HE TOLD ME ABOUT HIS END. HE SAID WHEN YOU ARE FELLED BY A BLOW FROM A MONKEY, IT WILL BE THE SIGNAL FOR THE ANNIHILATION OF THE DEMON RACE.
HANUMAN AGAIN ASSUMED A TINY FORM TO EXPLORE THE CITY.
THAT'S THE MOST SPLENDID PLACE! IT MUST BELONG TO RAVAN.


HE SAW RAVAN, FAST ASLEEP.
NO SIGN OF SITA HERE! THANK GOD!
A LITTLE AHEAD, HANUMAN SAW A SMALLER PALACE, WHICH ATTRACTED HIS ATTENTION.
WHAT'S THAT? THE HOUSE OVER THERE LOOKS DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT.
THE MAGNIFICENT MANSION HAD A SMALL TEMPLE AND A TULSI PLANT IN THE COURTYARD.
ON THE WALL OF THE HOUSE, HE SAW THE SYMBOLS OF RAM, HIS BOW AND ARROW PAINTED PROMINENTLY.
HOW IS THIS POSSIBLE? LANKA IS A LAND OF DEMONS. HOW CAN A PIOUS MAN LIVE HERE?
श्री राम
श्री राम
WHILE HANUMAN WAS DEBATING OVER THIS DILEMMA, THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE WOKE UP. VIBHEESHAN, RAVAN'S YOUNGER BROTHER'S WAKING WORDS SURPRISED AND PLEASED HANUMAN.
RAM, RAM, RAM.
INDEED HE IS A GOOD MAN AND I SHOULD MAKE FRIENDS WITH HIM.
HANUMAN ASSUMED THE FORM OF A BRAHMIN AND CALLED OUT TO VIBHEESHAN.
RAM! RAM! IS ANYONE HOME?
OH! WELCOME, DEAR SIR! ARE YOU A BELIEVER TOO? ONE OF HARI'S DEVOTEES LIKE ME?
HANUMAN INTRODUCED HIMSELF AND NARRATED THE STORY OF RAM AND THE REASON HE HAD COME TO LANKA. VIBHEESHAN WAS THRILLED TO HEAR ABOUT RAM'S FRIENDSHIP WITH HANUMAN.
OH! BUT I AM SURPRISED TO FIND A DEVOTEE OF HARI AMONG DEMONS!
YES! I LIVE HERE AS PRECARIOUSLY AS THE POOR TONGUE TRAPPED BY SHARP TEETH ALL AROUND.


WHEN RAVAN HEARD OF HIS SON'S DEATH, HE WAS LIVID WITH RAGE. HE SENT HIS VALIANT SON MEGHNAD TO COUNTER THE MONKEY.
DON'T KILL HIM, MEGHNAD, CAPTURE HIM! LET'S FIND OUT FROM WHERE HE HAS COME.
YES, FATHER! I'LL BRING HIM TO YOU, BOUND IN ROPES.
MEGHNAD AND HANUMAN FOUGHT LIKE TWO MIGHTY ELEPHANTS IN COMBAT. AT LAST, MEGHNAD USED THE DIVINE MISSILE BRAHMASTR TO FELL HANUMAN.
HE HAS FAINTED! TIE HIM UP AT ONCE AND BRING HIM TO THE COURT.
YES! BEFORE HE WAKES UP, WE MUST LUG HIM THERE.
BY THE TIME THEY REACHED RAVAN'S COURT, HANUMAN HAD REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS. HE STOOD TALL AND FEARLESS BEFORE RAVAN.
WHO ARE YOU, MONKEY? ON WHOSE MIGHT DID YOU DARE TO DESTROY MY ORCHARDS? HAVEN'T YOU HEARD OF MY MIGHT?
I AM THE MESSENGER OF LORD RAM, WHOSE WIFE YOU HAVE BROUGHT HERE BY FORCE!
HANUMAN ADVISED RAVAN TO BEG RAM'S FORGIVENESS, BUT HIS ADVICE ENRAGED THE DEMON KING.
HAH! YOU THINK YOU ARE A SAGE, DO YOU? KILL HIM!
NO-NO! DON'T KILL AN ENVOY! IT'S NOT FAIR.
ALL RIGHT! JUST BREAK HIS LIMBS. HA HA HA!
IT WAS THEN THAT RAVAN SUGGESTED SETTING HANUMAN'S TAIL ON FIRE.
WRAPPING HIS TAIL IN OIL-SOAKED RAGS, THEY SET IT ON FIRE. HANUMAN MADE HIS TAIL LONGER AND LONGER. AS SOON AS HIS TAIL WAS ABLAZE, HANUMAN SHRANK HIS BODY AND SLIPPED OUT OF HIS BONDS.
THEN HE JUMPED UP TO THE RAMPARTS OF THE GOLDEN FORT OF LANKA.
SPRINGING FROM PLACE TO PLACE, HE ASSUMED HIS GIGANTIC FORM AND SOON SET THE ENTIRE CITY ABLAZE.
IN THE ENTIRE KINGDOM, ONLY ONE HOUSE WAS UNTOUCHED BY THE FURY OF THE FIRE. VIBHEESHAN, THE UNSCATHED ONE, WAS SAVED FOR BEING A DEVOTEE OF THE LORD.


AFTER BURNING DOWN THE CITY, HANUMAN DIVED INTO THE SEA TO PUT THE FIRE OUT. THEN HE WENT TO SEE SITA.
I AM GOING BACK NOW. BUT GIVE ME SOME TOKEN TO SHOW RAM THAT I MET YOU.
HERE YOU ARE! TAKE MY CHUDAMANI.
SITA UNCLASPED HER HEAD JEWEL AND GAVE TO HANUMAN.
SITA BADE FAREWELL TO HANUMAN.
IT WAS SUCH A RELIEF TO SEE YOU. NOW I HAVE TO SPEND DREARY DAYS AND WEARY NIGHTS HERE AGAIN. PLEASE TELL MY LORD THAT IF HE DOESN'T COME HERE IN A MONTH'S TIME, HE'LL FIND ME DEAD! BE GONE NOW!
HE WILL BE HERE SOON!
WITH A MIGHTY ROAR, HANUMAN TOOK OFF AND LEAPT ACROSS THE OCEAN.
OH, THERE HE IS!
HE LOOKS RADIANT! HE MUST HAVE FOUND SITA.
HAPPILY, WITH HANUMAN REGALING THEM WITH THE TALE OF HIS TAIL, THE MONKEY ARMY TROOPED BACK TO SEE SUGREEV AND RAM.
OH! HOW IS SITA? HOW DOES SHE PASS HER DAYS?
IT IS THE MEMORY OF YOUR NAME THAT SUSTAINS HER DAY AND NIGHT. SHE GAVE ME THIS JEWEL TO GIVE YOU.
RAM CLASPED THE CHUDAMANI TO HIS HEART.
HANUMAN THEN TOLD THEM IN DETAIL WHAT HE HAD SEEN IN LANKA, AND THE NEED TO ATTACK LANKA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.
GLORY TO RAM! THE LORD OF KOSALA!
AT THE HEAD OF THE ENORMOUS HORDE, WAS RAM, STRONG AND BRAVE, LEADING HIS ARMY TO THE VICTORY OF GOOD OVER EVIL.